

Platen
Lent
1758
Monfieur ^{de} BOSSU's

TREATISE

OF THE

EPICK POEM:

Containing

Many Curious Reflexions, very useful
and necessary for the Right Under-
standing and Judging of the Ex-
cellencies

O F

HOMER and VIRGIL.

Done into English from the French, with a new Original
Preface upon the same Subject, by W. J.

To which are Added,

An Essay upon Satyr, by Monsieur D'Acier;

AND

A Treatise upon Pastorals, by Monsieur Fontanelle.

LONDON, Printed for Tho. Bennet at the
Half-Moon in St. Paul's Church-yard, 1695.

MONROE 1807

To the Honorable
RICHARD BLANKINSHIP
OF THE
DOCTOR OF PHYSIC
AND

FELLOW of the College of Physicians
and Surgeons of the City of London
and Lecturer on the History of the
College of Physicians

and in the History of the
College of Physicians



to any other
perfect stranger to
be his country's physician
be one you are naturally acquainted with
well your excellent Prince Arthur
have in a great measure confined you to the
Rules and Precepts which Aristotle and Horace
and even our Bards have prescribed to the Poet.

It upon this Account, Sir, that I presume to
call the Translation under your Protection and
guaranteeing, as the good-natured Greek
says: the Poet's friend: so who would
know: But will thank the Critics: friends: and
the

To the Honoured

RICHARD BLACKMORE,
DOCTOR of PHYSICK,

A N D

FELLOW of the College of Physicians
in LONDON.

S I R,

THE ensuing Treatise, since it has learned to speak English, seems, by a peculiar kind of Title, to lay a more especial Claim to your Patronage, than to any others. For though the Translator be a perfect Stranger to you, yet the Author, which he has ventur'd to translate, is well known by all to be one you are intimately acquainted with: witness your excellent Prince Arthur, wherein you have in a great measure confin'd your self to the Rules and Precepts which Aristotle and Horace, and even our Bossu, have prescrib'd to the Epick Poem.

'Tis upon this Account, Sir, that I presume to cast this Translation under your Protection; not questioning but, as the good-natur'd Critick is always the Poet's Friend; so now, vice versa, the generous Poet will stand the Criticks Friend, and

suffer his impartial Reflexions to appear in the English World under the Patronage of so great a Name.

I might here run out into high and just Encomiums upon your late extraordinary Performance; but there is no need for it, since the Work loudly speaks forth its own Praises: and I should rather seem unjust in saying too little, than be thought guilty of Flattery for saying too much in its Commendation.

I have, Sir, in the Preface, ventur'd to make some few Reflexions on your Poem, and hope you have Candour enough to excuse the Freedom I have taken therein. If I have offended, or committed any Mistake, I here declare my self willing and ready to retract upon due Conviction; and shall be always forward to submit my self to the Sentence of better Judgments.

All I have more to say, is, to beg Pardon for my Presumption, in desiring to prefix your Name before my weak Performance; which Favour I hope you will grant to,

Honoured Sir,

Your very Oblig'd and
Humble Servant,

(though unknown)

W. F.

T H E

THE
PREFACE
OF THE
TRANSLATOR.

TIS Sir Roger L' Eſtrange's jocular Remark in his Preface before his English Tully's Offices, *That a Man had as good go to Court without a Cravat, as appear in Print without a Preface:* And therefore, becauſe my Author has none, it may be expected I ſhould Preface it for him. But ſince I undertake to perſonate ſo great a Critick as the Learned Boſſu; it may to ſome ſeem requiſite. (let me be never ſo meanly qualified for ſuch an undertaking) that I ſhould give the World ſome Account of Poetry in General, and eſpecially of the *Epick Poem* in Particular.

As for Poetry in General, I ſhall not trouble my head much about it at preſent; the World has had enough on that Subject already, and by much abler Pens. " That its Nature is Divine, that it owes its Original to Heaven; how from ſmall Beginnings it roſe at laſt to that Luſtre we find it in, in " *Homers*

The PREFACE.

“ *Homer's* and *Virgil's* days ; and withal what strange
“ Effects it always had upon the Minds of Men :
These things , and much to the same purpose have
been told over and over , and need not be repeated
here. Not only *Aristotle* and *Horace* , but their *Com-
mentators* and the *Criticks* , not only of our own but
other Nations , have made it their Business to set forth
its Excellence , and to recommend it to Mankind as
the noblest *Humane* (I had almost said *Divine*) *Art*
that is. Besides , that its true Use and End is to in-
struct and profit the World more than to delight
and please it , has been so fully and clearly made out ,
by *Dacier* in his Preface before his Reflections on
Aristotle's Poësie , and lately by our own Country-man
the Learned Dr. *Blackmore* in his Preface before his
Prince Arthur , that I think my self exempted in a great
measure from that task likewise.

But however , it cannot but with a Blush be con-
fessed , that most of our *Modern Poets* seem to have
diverted the true Design of *Poetry* to one of a quite
contrary Nature , whilst they study rather to please
the debauch'd World in their own way , than to give
them any wholesome instructions to become Wiser
and Better. To such as these therefore it would be
adviseable to consult Dr. *Blackmore's* Preface , and the
third Chapter of the fourth Book in the ensuing Trea-
tise : And they will there find how much the being
a Man of Probity and Vertue is to be preferr'd , to the
being a debauch'd , complaisant and temporizing Poet.
They would do well to consider , that all the Reproach
and Scandal which is cast upon *Poetry* and *Themselves* ,
is in a great measure owing to their own ill con-
duct. For when the unthoughtful Many see Men of de-
bauch'd Principles Usurp to themselves the sacred
Name of Poet ; when they see base , servile , merce-
nary Souls prostitute their Pens to mean , sordid , and
unbecoming Subjects , such as lewd and profane *Plays* ,
abusive

The PREFACE.

abusive and scurrilous *Farces*, Lascivious *Odes*; and wanton *Sonnets*; they think they have reason to look upon Poets with contempt, and to stile them *the scorn of mankind*. - And it were well if their Censures went no farther, and only touch'd those that deserv'd them; but they go on, and conclude that Poetry it self is in all the fault, and that 'tis *This* that is the cause of so much extravagancy and debauchery in the World. But it does not follow, because many, that pretend to Poetry, do by their infamous practices bring a scandal upon it; and because an ill natured multitude, that has little or no relish for such sort of things, casts dirt upon it; I say it does not follow from thence, that Poetry is ever the worse. For at this rate *Religion* it self, though the best thing in the World, yet is vilified and scandaliz'd by too many, and would fall under the same uncharitable Censure. In spite therefore of Malice, Envy, and Detraction of its Enemies, and notwithstanding all the Contempt and Scandal cast upon it, by its pretended Friends and Voraries, it has been, and will still be accounted a Noble thing by the Wiser and the better part of Mankind.

Now whatever is said in favour of Poetry in General, may in a great measure be applied to the *Epick Poem* in Particular; That being the Principal and most sublime part of all Poësie, and what *Rapin* with a great deal of Reason affirms to be *the greatest Work Humane Wit is capable of*. I might here shew at large how far it does excel the other two parts of Great Poetry, *Tragedy* and *Comedy*. But this every one acknowledges, even those who are the greatest Admirers of, and pretenders to the *Drama*; and 'tis this that my Author sufficiently makes out in several Passages of his Treatise; so that I think my self excus'd from that invidious task. My present business shall be only to consider, how excellent it is in its own Nature; what

The PREFACE.

what a vast, Universal, and Judicious *Genius* it requires; what surprizing effects it has had in the World when duly perform'd; what encouragement it met with among the *Ancients*; and the Reasons of its declining state among the *Moderns*. Nor do I desire, even in this, to dictate any thing, but with all submission refer what I say to the Verdict of better Judgments.

The *Excellency* of the *Epick Poem* appears, in that, as we hinted before, 'tis the Principal, and most sublime part of all *Poesie*. 'Tis that on which the most Commendations, the highest Praises, and the largest, freshest Garlands are, and have been bestow'd. But this only gives us a general notion of its *Greatness*, we may see it in its clearest Lustre, if we would but take a particular view of its Nature and Design. And because I cannot express it better and more concisely in my own, I shall make bold to use my Author's Words. "The *Epopée*, or *Epick Poem* (says he) is a "Discourse or Story invented by Art to form "Mens Manners by such Instructions as are disguis'd "under the Allegory of some one Important Acti- "on, which is related in Verse after a Probable, Di- "verting, and surprizing manner.

Here you have a short, but full and clear Idea of the *Nature* and *Design* of the *Epick Poem*. I shall not here spend time to explain the parts of this Definition; 'tis so fully and clearly done in the ensuing Treatise, that it needs no farther Illustration. Now what, according to this account, can be more Great and Noble? To regulate Mens manners; to purge and refine them from the Dregs and Corruptions of Vice; to keep their Passions within due bounds, and to make them the Servants, not the Masters of right Reason, has in all Ages been esteemed a piece of the highest Prudence, and a great perfection of Humane Nature. Hence the *Moralist* himself deservedly derives all his Glory. But if

The PREFACE.

if he merits much, the *Epick Poet* merits much more. The one indeed by his plain, convincing Instructions can prevail upon those, whose minds are unprejudic'd, and whose Reason is rightly inform'd; But the other by the Charms and allurements of his Precepts breaks through all Opposition, conquers all prejudice, insinuates himself into the inmost recesses of the Soul, and makes a thorough Convert of the most obstinate Immoralist. The *Epick Poet*, to back all, makes use of frequent Examples, the strongest Arguments to perswade Men to be Vertuous; and his whole piece is an Imitation of such things as may probably happen. To conclude, he like a skillful Physician mixes Sweet with Bitter, that which is Pleasant with the Profitable, and gilds o'er the unsightly Pill, that so even the Nauseous but wholesome Physick might steal down the better. I know there may be some, who utterly dislike this way, and cry 'tis too Trickish, fit only to cjole Women and delude Children. But may I crave leave to tell such, that they seem not to have studied Nature sufficiently, else they would have discern'd in the most sage Tempers, some thing of the Child, that loves to be tempted and allur'd even to that which is his own Good and Happiness. This is Conspicuous to all, who are acquainted with the World a little, and have Read Men as well as Books: So that I need not stand upon proving what is so notoriously apparent. I am sensible much more might be said to shew the *Excellency* of the *Epick Poem*; but that little which has been already alledg'd in its favour, may, I presume, be enough to keep up its esteem among the more judicious part of the World: And as for others, of a more perverse principle, Though never so much were said, it would never satisfy them.

But to go on; 'tis no small Commendation to the *Epick Poem*, that its nature is such as requires the largest, most Universal and Judicious *Genius* to undertake

The PREFACE.

take it. None but Men of the most exalted Souls, warmest Thoughts, liveliest Fancies, and deepest Judgments, are fit for such a noble Enterprize. Every Man, we see, who has but an Ordinary Capacity, thinks himself Scholar enough to be a Physician, a Lawyer, or a Divine: But the poor Pretender is a little more modest in his pretences to *Epick Poetry*. Here he stands off, and keeps at as awful a distance from *Parnassus*, as the trembling *Israelites* of old did from the burning Mount. Nay the *Poetasters* themselves, who have ventur'd at all the lesser sorts of *Poems*, yet knowing their own strength, have with all reverence receded from so high an Undertaking.

So vast a *Genius* does this sort of *Poetry* require, that if we will rely on the testimony of *Rapin*, one of the ablest and most impartial Criticks this Age or any other Age since *Aristotle* and *Horace*, has produced, we shall find that there have been but only two, *Homer* and *Virgil*, who have wrote in this way with any tolerable success. This Judicious Critick mentions several of the *Greek Poets*, such as *Coluthus*, who wrote of the Rape of *Hellen*; *Tryphiodorus*, who gives an account of the taking of *Troy*; *Musaeus*, who wrote the History of *Leander*; *Apollonius Rhodius*, who relates the Expedition of the *Argonauts*; *Quintus Calaber*, who undertook to write the Supplement to the *Iliad* and *Odysseis*; and *Nonnus*, who wrote the History of the Birth, Adventures, Victories, and Apotheosis of *Bacchus*. He likewise mentions several of the *Latin Poets*, such as *Lucan*, *Statius*, *Silius Italicus*, *Valerius Flaccus*, and *Claudian*; but withall takes Notice how far short all these fall of the Perfections of the other two. As for the *Moderns*, he takes notice of several among the *Italians*, namely *Dante*, *Petrarch*, *Boccaccio*, *Boyardo*, *Oliviero*, *Ariosto*, *Tasso*, *Sannazarius* and *Vida*; but he thinks the three first deserve not the
very

The PREFACE.

very name of *Heroick Poets*; and as for the rest, he has observ'd so many imperfections in them, that they can stand in no manner of Competition with *Homer* and *Virgil*, whom at least they have pretended to Imitate. Among the *Spaniards* he only mentions *Camoens* a *Portuguese*, and says, "He only regarded to express the haughtiness of his Nation in his Poem of the *Conquest of the Indies*: And that he is fierce and fastidious in his Composition, but has little Discernment, and little Conduct. Nor does this Ingenuous Critick favour his own Countrymen, *Dubartas* and *Ronsard*; but taxes them with such imperfections that one may reasonably dispute with them the name of *Epick Poets*. If you would be satisfied more particularly in this Point, I must refer you to the *Reflections*, which *Rapin* has made upon the *Epick Poets* in all Ages: And there you will perceive what a vast difference he makes between *Homer* and *Virgil*, and all the rest that wrote after them. *Homer* (says he) *animates me*, *Virgil beats me*, and all the rest freeze me, so cold and flat they are.

He has not indeed made any *Reflections* on our *English Poets*, and this *Rymer* presumes proceeded from his ignorance of our Language, which he did not understand so well, as to pass a Judgment on what was writ in it. Whereupon *Rymer* himself has undertook to Criticise upon them. *Chaucer*, he will not allow for an *Epick Poet*, the Age he lived in not being sufficient for a great design; being an Age of *Tales*, *Ballads* and *Roundelays*. *Spencer*, whom he reckons the first of our *Heroick Poets*, yet falls under his Censure, and is tax'd for his want of a true Idea, for his rambling after marvellous adventures, for making no Conscience of Probability, for making his Poem a perfect *Fairy Land*, and for his unlucky Choice of the Stanza, which in no wise is proper for our language. *Sir William D'Avenant* is the next *Heroick Poet*

The PREFACE.

Poet our *English Critick* takes notice of. He acknowledges that his *Wit* was well known; that in his Preface to his *Gondibert*, appear some strokes of an extraordinary Judgment; that he is said to have a particular Talent for the *Manners*; that his Thoughts are great; and lastly that there appears something roughly noble throughout this *Fragment*. Yet after all, he blames him, for the ill choice of his Subject; for his bad Conduct; for a Vicious Oeconomy; and for his unhappy choice of the *Tetrastick*. Cowley is the third and last *Heroick Poet*, our Author mentions, and to him he gives particular Commendations. He says, "That a more happy *Genius* for *Heroick Poesse* appears in Cowley; that he understood the Purity, the Perspicuity, the Majesty of the Style and the Vertue of Numbers; that he could discern what was beautiful and pleasant in Nature; and could express his Thoughts without the least difficulty or constraint; that he understood to dispose of the Matters, and to manage his Digressions; and lastly that he understood *Homer* and *Virgil*, and as prudently made his advantage of them. Yet after all these high Commendations, he laments his not carrying on the Work so far as he design'd, and his not living to revise what he did leave behind him: And blames him for his ill choice of the Subject of his Poem, in that like *Lucan* he made choice of *History*, and a History where he was so strictly ty'd up to the Truth. He likewise blames him for inserting the *Lyrick* measure in the very body of his Poem. Thus far the Judicious *Rymer* goes, and it were to be wish'd he had pass'd his judgment on the famous *Milton* another of our *English Poets*; but since he has wav'd saying any thing about him, till some other time, I shall crave leave to insert the Opinion of *Dryden*, a profess'd Poet, and as a great Judge of Poetry. He tells us in his *Dedication before the Translation of Juvenal*,

" That

THE PREFACE.

" That *Milton* had a *Genius* equal to *Spencer's*; and
 " greater than that of *Cowley*; that his *Thoughts* are
 " elevated, his *Words* sounding; and that no Man
 " has so happily copy'd the Manner of *Homer*; or so
 " copiously translated his *Gracisms*, and the *Latin Ele-*
 " *gancies* of *Virgil*. But then he says likewise, " That
 " his Subject is not that of an *Heroick Poem*, properly
 " so called; it being the losing of our happiness,
 " where the Event is not prosperous like that of o-
 " ther *Epick Works*: That his Heavenly *Machines*
 " are too many in proportion to the Human Perso-
 " nages, which are but two: That he runs into a
 " Flat of Thought, sometimes for a hundred Lines
 " together: That he was transported too far in the
 " use of Obsolete Words: And lastly that he can,
 " by no means approve of his Choice of *Blank Verse*.
 By this short view of our *English Poets*, which I have
 abstracted from *Rymer* and *Dryden*, one may clearly
 perceive how far short even they as well as their
 Neighbours have fell of the Excellencies and Perfection-
 ons of *Homer* and *Virgil*.

But I must not leave Matters thus. For since my
 translating *Bossu*, and the thoughts I had of Publish-
 ing it, the World has been honour'd with an Ex-
 cellent *Heroick Poem* in *English*, done by our own
 Country-man the Learned and Ingenious Dr. *Blackmore*.
 Which puts us Now upon thinking that the Poems of
 the two *Ancients* are not wholly unimitable. It may
 therefore be expected that in a Preface of this Nature,
 and in this part of it where we are treating of the
 vastness of the *Genius* that is requisite for *Epick Poessie*,
 something should be said on the *Genius* of that Au-
 thor.

'Tis far from my design to set up for a *Profest*
Critic; but that I may do some Justice to the Merits of
 that great Man, since no one else, as I hear of, has as
 yet Criticis'd publickly on the *Poem*, I shall venture to

THE PREFACE.

give the World a Taste of the thoughts I have conceiv'd of it in general. And a Taste it must only be, since the Limits of a Preface, and the Sense I have of my own inability in passing a Judgment upon so great an Author, do sufficiently excuse me from being more minute and particular, leaving that Task wholly to abler Judges in Poetry.

This therefore must be own'd by all, that he has made a happy Choice of his *Subject* and *Hero*, whereby he signalizes his own Country; which is more than any of our *English* Poets have done before him, besides the *Romantick* *Spencer*. He professes in his Preface to have imitated *Virgil* in his Design, and how well he has Copy'd that great Model let us now see. If we will examine things according to the Rules *Bossu* has laid down, his *Fable* will appear to be exactly the same with that of the *Aeneid*. His *Action* is like that of the *Latin* Poet, *One, Entire, Noble, Great, and Important Action*, viz. The Restoration of a decay'd Church and State to its ancient splendor and Glory. The *Intrigues* he makes use of to hinder his Hero from accomplishing his great and good designs are of the very same make with those of *Virgil*. For as in the *One, Juno*, who had equal power both by Sea and Land, raises all the Obstacles, that lay in the way of the *Trojan* Hero: So in the other, *Lucifer* the Prince of the Air, equal in Power to *Juno*, raises all the Storms by Sea, and all the Disturbances by Land, that hindred the settlement of our *British* Hero. And as the *Intrigues*, so the *Solution* or *Unravelling* of these *Intrigues* are as just, as regular, and as natural as those in the *Aeneid*. In his *Inscription* or *Title* he has follow'd *Homer* in his *Odyssseis*, and *Virgil* in his *Aeneid*, who have both inscrib'd their Poems with their *Hero's* Name. His *Proposition* is as full, but withal as modest both with respect to himself and his Hero, as *Horace* requires, and *Virgil* has practis'd. His *Invocation* is much

The PREFACE.

much the same with that of the *Aeneid*, and therein he has like *Virgil* Inserted * his Hero's Character. The Narration * The Generous Briton. of our *English* Poet (bating some few defects, which we shall mention by and by) is as exact as that of the *Latin*: And has in a great measure all those Qualifications which *Bossu* says are requisite thereto; for it is Pleasant, Probable, Moving, Marvellous, and Active. The Manners of his human Personages, their Interests, and Designs, are as regularly order'd, as those in *Virgil's* Poem. All the Characters are nobly drawn, and look like the Curious Strokes of a great Master; for they all tend to, and Centure in the General Character of the Poem and Hero, namely in that noble Ornament of the Soul, **GENEROSITY**. His Machines are very Natural, and adapted to the Genius and Notions of our times, as *Virgil's* were to those of his Age. His Expression is noble and Majestical; his Verse Sonorous, Masculine, and Strong; his Thoughts are Sublime; his Similes natural; his Descriptions proper; and his Sentences few and regular. In a word throughout the whole he seems in a great Measure to have confin'd himself to the * Rules of *Aristotle* and *Horace*, to have copy'd the best of any Man the Perfections of *Virgil*, and to have shewn a strength of Genius, an Heighth of Fancy, and a correctness of Judgment, that comes but a little behind that of the two Ancient Poets.

* Which may be one great Argument to prove that the writing according to the Rules of *Aristotle* and *Horace* is no such Clog to a Poet's Fancy as some pretend.

But after all it must be said (though with some sort of reluctancy) that there are some few things which need polishing, and which after second and more deliberate thoughts, that great Master would no doubt have corrected. For one may question whether his Digressions are not too tedious, and some-

THE PREFACE.

times foreign to the Subject: Especially that of *Prince Arthur's* Speech to King *Hoel*, which takes up two whole Books. For what relation has this Recital of the Creation of the World; of the Fall of Man; of his Redemption; of the Resurrection; of the last Judgment, and the like with the main Action of the Poem; which is the Restoring Religion and Liberty, to the *British* Nation, and settling both Church and State on their Ancient Foundations of Truth and Peace? I know it may be said in favour of it, that it was necessary for the Conversion of *Hoel*, that such an account of things should be given him. But would not a bare Recital of a few Lines, that such a Relation was given him, have been sufficient? And would not such a Conduct have been more Conformable to the Nature of *Epick Poësie*, which excludes every thing that is foreign to the main purpose?

They who think to save this by saying, that this Speech is in Imitation of *Aeneas's* Speech to *Dido*, will be owned by all that have Read and compar'd both, to be egregiously mistaken, and the Author himself has no reason to thank them for making such a ridiculous Comparison. There is no manner of likeness between these two Speeches. The one, namely that of *Aeneas*, is a story of whatever had happen'd to him for six Years together since the taking of *Troy*, and 'tis from that time the *Action* of the Poem begins: But the *Narration* of *Prince Arthur* is a Relation of things, wherein he had no more Interest than any other ordinary Man and Christian; and were we to reckon the *Duration* of the *Action*, from the time whereby the Poet begins this Speech, as all *Criticks* have done that of the *Aeneid*, it would not be the *Action* of six or seven Years, but of six times as many Ages. There is no Comparison then to be made between these two Speeches; but that of our *English* Poet

The PREFACE.

Poet is wholly a Digression, and the other necessary and essential to the *Æneid*. That which our Author design'd to answer the Speech of *Æneas* to *Dido*, is doubtless the Speech of one of Prince *Arthur*'s Attendants, *Lucius*, to King *Hoel*: As appears if we compare the Beginning of this Speech to the beginning of that in the *Æneid*. *Lucius* begins thus:

*How sad a task do your Commands impose
That must renew insufferable Woes?
That must our Grief with sad Affliction feed,
And make your generous Heart with pity bleed.
Whilst I the dismal Scenes of ill disclose,
And bleeding Albion's ghastly wounds expose.
The Cruel Foes in telling would relent,
And with their Tears, the Spoils, they tang'd lament.
Pity would Picts and Saxon Breasts invade,
And make them mourn, o'er the dire Wounds they made.
But since you're pleas'd to bear our Countries fate,
I'll pay Obedience, and our Woes relate.*

Now all this is an exact Copy of the Beginning of *Æneas*'s Speech to *Dido*, which runs thus:

*Infandum, Regina, jubes renovare dolorem:
Trojanas ut opes & lamentabile regnum
Eructint Danaï, quæque ipse miserrima vidi,
Et quorū pars magna fui. Quis tanta fando,
Myrmidonum, Dolopūmve, aut thuri miles Ulysses,
Temperet à Lacrymis? Et jam nox humida cælo
Præcipitat, suadentque cadentia Sydera fomitos.
Sed si tantus amor casus cognoscere nostros,
Et breuiter Trojæ supremum audire laborem,
Quamquam animus meminisse horret, luctuque refugit:
Incipiam.*

The PREFACE.

In this Speech *Blackmore*, in my opinion, is more lucky in the Choice of his Speaker than *Virgil* was. For doubtless 'tis more for the Honour of the Hero, at least more agreeable to the Notions and Religion of our times, and greater advantages might be drawn from another person's telling his Adventures, than if he himself were the Relater of them. But even in this Speech our *English* Poet seems not to be so regular as is requisite. *Lucius*

OTU 211551 H. 11 begins too high in his Narration. * *Aeneas* begins his recital at the building of the *Wooden Horse*, and the taking of *Troy*; this is regular, and answers exactly to what *Dido* had desir'd of him. But *Lucius*, though *Hoel* only desir'd him to relate *Prince Arthur's Story*, and *King Uter's Fate*, tells him of the Decay of old *Rome*; of the *Britains* shaking off the *Roman Yoke*; how they were invaded by the *Scots* and *Picts*; that at last they were forc'd to send to the *Saxons* for their Assistance, who instead of Friends became their Masters; and then he comes to relate what was requir'd. Now all that is said before the account of *King Uter's* fighting with the *Saxons* and his overthrow, is, preliminary and wholly foreign to the main Action. For if we will compute the Duration of the Action of *Prince Arthur*, according to the Rules by which we compute the Duration of the Action of the *Aeneid*, we must reckon, that it lasted from the Death of *King Uter*, and the overthrow of his Army, which put *Prince Arthur* upon travelling into *Neustria*; untill the Death of *Tollo*, which wholly made way for the resettlement of *Prince Arthur*. These are my thoughts, but perhaps the Author had other designs in his head, particularly that of preaching Morality and Religion to an Immoral and Irreligious Age; which seems in a great measure to excuse his long Digressions.

Again

THE PREFACE

Again one may question whether most of his *Descriptions* are not too long, and whether if our *English* Poet had bestow'd as much pains, and spent as much time about his Poem, as *Virgil* did about his *Aeneid*, he would not have shortn'd his *Descriptions*, avoided Repetitions of the same things, and been more correct throughout the whole.

Lastly it is urg'd by some, that he has but a few *Episodes* in Comparison to *Virgil*, and it seems probable to me, that this Thinness of *Episodes* has oblig'd him to be so long and tedious in his *Descriptions* and *Digressions*; else his Poem would have taken up but a little Compass. These are all the faults that I think are worth taking notice of; there are indeed other little slips, which touch not the Essence and Bottom of the *Fable* and *Poem*, therefore I shall not mention them. Nor are those I have mention'd such as cast any great discredit upon our *English* Poet. For notwithstanding all that has been said, spite of Ill-nature, Envy, and Detraction, he may justly be reckon'd the Next to, though not an *Equal* with *Homer* and *Virgil*.

Having thus taken a short View of the Poets of all Ages, and of almost all the polite Countries in the World, and having found how far short all of them, even *Blackmore* himself, fall of the Perfections and Excellencies of the other Two, it may seem necessary to decide a Controversie that has arose among the Learned whether *Homer* or *Virgil* had the greater Genius, and which of them deserv'd the greater Applause. We find them divided into Parties about it, some declaring in favour of the One, some in favour of the Other. But without detracting from either, we may venture to say that each of them had their peculiar Excellencies, which the other had not. If *Homer* was the first Model of this way, yet *Virgil* was under such Circumstances as gave him not only the Glory of well copying so great a Pattern, but even of a primary Invention,

The PREFACE.

vention. If the *First* had more Flame, the *Last* had more Phlegm, and tho' the Poems of the one had more Spirit in them, yet the *Epic* of the other was more Correct. On the other hand, if we do not meet with those perfect Hero's, and those noble Ideas of Virtue in *Homer*, as are to be seen in *Virgil*, 'tis to be attributed more to the unhappiness and Imperfections of the times the *Greek* Poet liv'd in, than to any want of Judgment and skill. In a word they are both excellent in their kind, and if *Homer* seems better than *Virgil*, 'tis because it was his fortune to be born first. As on the contrary, if any one thinks the *Latin* Poet to be best, 'tis because he had so excellent a Model to imitate. However the case is, yet 'tis evident they both had large *Geniuses*, and such as no others, as we know of, could stand in Competition with.

Now it is not to be wonder'd at, if by the great performances of such an extraordinary *Genius* as animated *Homer* and *Virgil*, many great, extraordinary and almost miraculous Effects were produc'd. Love, Admiration, and Esteem were the common Tributes which the Vulgar paid to the Venerable Name of Poet. They were so charm'd with the sweetness of all Poetical Composures, that they look'd upon what the Poet said as Divine, and gave the same credit to it, as to an Oracle. Hence it came to pass that all the Poets Writings were among the Heathen reckon'd as so many Lessons or Sermons of Morality, which polish'd the Manners, smooth'd the Temper, and civiliz'd the Disposition of the most Barbarous Nations. Nor is it unreasonable to Imagine that even the Refinedness of Athens was owing more to the Poets, than to the Philosophers Instructions. Of all that has been said in favour of the Poets, *Homer* may claim a great share, since if we will believe Horace in the Case, his Writings were more instructive and useful,

for

* Plinius, ac melius
Chrysippo aut. Crato-
re dicit. Ep. ad Loll.

a great share, since if we will believe
Horace in the Case, his Writings
were more instructive and useful,

THE P R E F A C E.

for the Conduct of human Life, than the Precepts of even the best Moral Philosophers. 'Tis to be confessed, we are in the dark, as to what *Effects* his two Poems had in the Age he liv'd in: But this we know, that in after Ages they have been had in universal Esteem, and will always be admir'd as long as Learning and Good-Manners have any repute in the World. The same may be said of *Virgil*: For the more any Age increases in Sound Knowledge, and Ingenious Literature, the more to be sure will his Poem be had in Admiration. Besides it seems to have had a strange and peculiar Effect in the Age, and upon the State he liv'd under. For 'tis more than Probable that the publishing of his *Æneid* conduc'd very much to the settling *Augustus* on the Imperial Throne. We know what a strange Aversion the *Romans* had to the very name of Monarchy, and 'tis not likely they would so soon have exchang'd their belov'd *Democracy* for that which they so much hated, had they not been work'd over to it by the Instructions of *Virgil*: who informs them, "That when Heaven decrees to settle a State upon such or such a Foundation, 'tis Atheism and Irreligion to oppose its designs; and such an Affront to the divine Majesty and Wisdom as should certainly meet with speedy, and condign Punishment."

Let us now see what *Encouragement* the *Epick* Poets have met with. As for *Homer*, the Times he liv'd in are so obscure, that we can gather nothing of Certainty from *History* about him. But 'tis by most concluded that he was as Poor as he was Ingenious: And that though many Cities after his Death claim'd him for their own, yet none of them gave the blind Bard that encouragement he merited whilst alive. 'Tis likely he was admir'd and esteem'd by all, but receiv'd no other reward that we know of, for his Deserts, but what our poor *Spenser* did, namely a Courtiers Smile; insignificant Promises, and a few fawning Compliments.

The PREFACE.

ments. *Virgil* had the luck to live in better times; for he met with a *Mæcenus*, who honour'd him with his favour, encourag'd him with his Gifts, and introduc'd him into the Esteem of *Augustus* himself. This indeed was something more than the empty Breath of popular Applause; and *Parnassus* at that time was not such a starving, barren Soil, as before and afterwards it prov'd. Then Poets were had in admiration, and every one receiv'd that recompence, which was their due. This was the Poets Golden Age, and all other Polite Learning met with such ample Encouragement, as made it flourish more under the Reign of *Augustus*, than in after Ages, even to the Honour and Admiration of those, and to the disgrace and reproach of succeeding times. There have been indeed some intervals since, wherein Poets have met with their due Rewards. *Ariosto* and *Tasso* are said to have met with their Patrons, who accepted of their Pieces, and recompenc'd their Labours. And in France, *Richlieu* was a great and never-failing Friend to the *Muses* and their Votaries. But at other times the poor Bards have been left to feed upon the empty Air of Vulgar Fame. For a proof of this, we need only have recourse to the Poets of our own Nation, who whilst living have most of them met with the same fate as their fore-Father *Ælmer*, tho' when Dead they have like him been even Idoliz'd. But this *Posthumous Fame* is but a poor Subsistence for a living Poet: And this gives us a just occasion to enquire into the Reasons of the declining State of *Epick Poetry* among the *Moderns*, especially in our own Nation. One would wonder how it comes to pass, that in such an Age as this, wherein all manner of Polite Learning shines with as great a Lustre, as it did in the Reign of *Augustus*, *Epick Poetry* should be the only slighted and neglected thing. But for all our Wonder, Experience shews us, that 'tis so far disregarded by the Learned World, that few or none, tho' duly qualified, will venture

THE PREFACE.

ture upon such an Undertaking; and there are but a few likewise that understand the true nature and design of an *Epick Poem*.

There have been many Reasons brought to prove it next to impossible for one of our *Modern Poets* to write a true *Heroick Poem*, such a one as *Homer* and *Virgil* have wrote. Some of these Reasons I shall just mention; and prove them to be only pretences at the best; and then I shall make bold to propose some other Reasons of the declining State of *Heroick Poetry* in our times, which perhaps may seem to the unprejudic'd Reader to be of more weight and consequence, than any that have as yet been alledg'd.

First of all 'tis objected by some, *That we want due Matter for an Heroick Poem*: That is, the *History* of our Nation is not able to furnish us with an *Action* or an *Hero* that is fit for such a Poem. Were we indeed to judge of this by the Practice of *Sir William D'Avenant* and *Mr. Cowley*, who have each of them made choice of a *Subject* and *Hero*, that has nothing to do with the *English Nation*, we might then be inclin'd to suppose it was for want of due and just *Matter* in our own *Annals*. But I think they had no need of searching into Foreign *History* for their *Actions* and *Hero's*, since they might with more Credit to themselves and with more Honor to their Country, have met with both nigher Home. 'Tis certain our own *History* could have furnish'd them with as just a *Subject* for *Heroick Poetry*, as any other. Experience has shown us since, by the happy Choice *Dr. Blackmore* has made of *Prince Arthur*, that our *Annals* are not so barren of Great and Noble *Actions* and *Heroes* as some would pretend. It argues then great Ignorance, or at least great Negligence in the search of our *Records* to say, *That we want due Matter for an Heroick Poem*.

Again 'tis objected by others, *That we want a Genius for such an Undertaking*. This indeed is a weightier Reason

The PREFACE.

Reason than the former, and if true, would silence all our pretences to *Epick Poetry*. Sir *William Temple* in his *Essay of Ancient and Modern Learning*, presses this Argument very strongly against the *Modern Poets*. But without any offence to that great Man, it may be justly affirm'd, That this last Age has produc'd as many great and noble *Genius's*, as any other Age before it: So that had they been inclin'd to *Epick Poetry*, and received any encouragement that way, they might no question have come off with the same success as they have in the *Drama*. Sir *William* will not allow our *Moderns* to be any more than *Dwarfs* in Learning, when compar'd to the *Ancients*; and then, by a pretty sort of Allegory, he goes about to prove, that they with all the Advantages of writing after the *Ancients*, cannot make so great a Progress in Learning as those did. I shall not trouble my self with refuting his Assertion, since that is done already by Mr. *Wootton* in his *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning*, wherein he sufficiently proves the *Moderns* to be as tall in Learning, if not taller than Sir *William's* *Giants* were; and that 'tis not want of *Genius*, but some Accidental Circumstances, which make the Men of this Age come behind those of former times in Oratory and Poetry.

Another Objection is, our defect of Numbers, and that our Language is not proper for *Heroick Poetry*. This is what *Wootton* himself urges in his *Reflections*, when he will not allow the former Reason to hold good. He tells us there, " That the Greek was so smooth, soft, and dul-
 " cile, that *Homer* had great encouragement even
 " from his Language, to set about an *Heroick Poem*:
 " That the *Latin* was majestic and stately, but withal
 " so rough, that *Virgil* had much ado to run it down to
 " Verse: But that our *Modern Languages* are all so
 " harsh and unmanageable, that the Poets have no encour-
 " agement to form any thing that is great out of them.
 This, if I mistake not his sense, is the force of his Ob-
 jection.

The PREFACE.

jection. But it may be reply'd, That tho' our Language is not so smooth and sonorous as the Greek, yet it comes the next to it of any Language. 'Tis well known how it has been refining ever since *Waller's* and *Cowley's* time, and it seems at present to be almost arriv'd to its Purity and Perfection. * *Dryden* calls it a

Noble Language, and is only sorry we have not a more certain measure of it, as they have in *France*, where they have an *Academy* erected for

* *Dryd. Dedic. to the E. of Orrery before the Rival Ladies.*

that purpose, and endowed with large Privileges by the present King. *Rapin* himself acknowledges the Majesty of our Language, which, he says, is proper for great Expressions: *Rymer* compares the *Spanish*, the *Italian*, the *French*, and the *German*, to our Language, and prefers the *English* to all the rest; which, he says, has a weight, fullness, vigour, force, gravity, and fitness for *Heroick Poesie*, above all other Languages. How true this is, appears from the daily Writings of our Poets, and especially from some of *Dryden's* Poems, and *Blackmore's* *Prince Arthur*, where their Expression is lofty and Majestical, the Verse smooth and strong, and the Numbers truly harmonious, and befitting their respective designs. I shall only add the Opinion of *Roscommon* in the Case, who speaking in Commendation of the *English* Language, makes it by much to be Superiour to the *French*. His words are these:

*But who did ever in French Authors see
The Comprehensive English Energy?
The weighty Bullion of one Sterling Line,
Drawn to French Wire, would through whole Pages shine.
I speak my Private, but Impartial Sense,
With Freedom, and (I hope) without offence.
For I'll Recant, when France can shew me Wit,
As strong as ours, and as succinctly writ.*

[*Roscommon's Essay on Translated Verse.*]

The PREFACE.

Lastly, 'tis Objected, " That we want the Benefit of
 " *Machines*; which the Heathen Poets made so great
 " use of, and with which their Poems were full from
 " one end to the other: That the Notions and Religi-
 " on of our times exclude all manner of Miracles, and
 " the extraordinary presence of the *Heathen Gods* from
 " having any thing to do in the ordinary Course of hu-
 " mane Affairs, which we believe now to be govern'd
 " only by one common *Providence*; and that upon this
 " account it seems altogether unpracticable for any of
 " our *Modern Poets* to write an *Heroick Poem* like to
 " those of *Homer* and *Virgil*. This Objection is duly
 stated, and fully answer'd by Mr. *Dryden* in his *Dedica-*
tion before the Translation of Juvenal. There he tells us,
 That our Religion does indeed debar the Poet from ma-
 king use of *Jupiter, Juno, Minerva, Venus*, or any others
 of the *Heathen Deities*: But that this is made up to the
 Poet another way; that 'tis not contrary to *Christiani-*
ty to believe that there are good and bad Spirits which
 have some sort of influence over humane Affairs: And
 that the Poet may form as just *Machines* out of these, as
 the *Ancients* did out of their *Divinities*. This is what
Blackmore has done even to Admiration, and his Practice
 and Conduct has put it beyond all dispute, that we may
 very safely and regularly make use of *Machines*, provi-
 ded they are such as are suited to the Notions and Reli-
 gion of our times.

These are the principal Objections I thought fit to
 mention, which are not such solid Reasons as some may
 imagine: I shall now according to my promise propose
 some others, which I think to be more substantial; but
 withal I must reserve to my self my first Caution, name-
 ly, that I design to dictate nothing herein, but to lay
 down my Thoughts as plainly and as clearly as possible,
 and to refer all to the Verdict of better Judgments.

First then I say, that one great Reason of that gene-
 ral Disesteem which *Epick Poetry* lies under, and of its
 declining

The PREFACE.

declining state among the Moderns, seems to be the Degeneracy of the present Age. We are fall'n at last into such unhappy times, wherein Men are as averſe to the Precepts of *Morality*, which the *Epick Poet* writes, as they are to the Lessons of *Divinity*, which the *Preacher* every Day inculcates. We do indeed read *Homer* and *Virgil*, but then 'tis not with a design, like the Bee, to suck the Honey out of them, but in imitation of more sordid Creatures, to extract all the Venom we can, in order to corrupt our Manners, and give a Gust to our Debaucheries. We are glad to find any passage in them that may seem to favour our Licentiousness, and even those that are design'd to be our Physick, we like Men of a Sick Stomach, turn all into rank Poyſon. Now no wonder if when our Palates are thus vitiated we have no Relish for the wholesome Instructions of *Epick Poetry*. Poets then, to please the Humour of the Age, are forced to write in their way, especially such of them as have not Souls great enough to stem the Torrent of so universal a Vice. Hence it comes to pass that we have so many vile Plays Acted on the Stage, wherein Vice is set off with all the Lustre, and recommended with all the Endearments that a corrupted *Poet's Wit* can invent, or the most loose *Debauché* could have desir'd. Thus both Poets and Audience, by an unheard of Complaisance, contribute to the Ruine and Corruption of each others Manners.

Another great Reason of the declining State of *Epick Poetry*, and of the Degeneracy of all other sorts of Poetry, is the want of due Encouragement. This is the true Ground of all our Grievances, and till this be provided against, 'tis to be fear'd nothing that is Great, Noble, Vertuous, and truly Good, will ever be produc'd by our Modern Poets. *Athens* and *Rome* made their Poets the Pensioners of their State, and maintain'd them honourably out of the Publick Treasury. Hence it was they never ventur'd, at least not in the

The PREFACE.

most Primitive times of Poetry, to write any thing which might reflect upon the Government they liv'd under, or upon the Gods they Worship'd. But now with us the Poet meets with no Encouragement, and only *One Laureat* is maintain'd at the publick Charge. Upon this account it is that Men of Large Souls, who cannot condescend to humour the Vulgar in their Licentiousness, turn the bent of their Studies another way, and fly *Parnassus* as they would the most dangerous Contagion. Others of a more pliable Temper take up with the *Stage*, and that they may receive some Profit themselves, study not to profit, so much as they do to please their Audience, and that in their lewd way too. But is it not a burning shame that such a Noble *Genius* as *Dryden* and others, that seem to be made for greater designs, should be forc'd to a fatal Dilemma, either to truckle to a *Playhouse* for the uncertain Profit of a *third Day*, or to starve for want of other reasonable Encouragement? But 'tis hop'd on all hands, that under the Reign of one that may truly be term'd another *Augustus*, and under the Patronage of one that may as justly bestil'd a *Second Meccenas*, Poetry will regain its ancient Privileges, and *Epick Poets* receive that publick and due Encouragement they really deserve.

The third and last Reason I shall mention for the declining State of *Epick Poetry* among the *Moderns* is, their notorious neglect of following the Rules which *Aristotle* and *Horace* have prescrib'd: This, and not want of *Genius*, has been the true Cause why several of our *English Epick Poets* have succeeded so ill in their Designs, *Rymer* urges this very strongly against *Spencer* himself, whom at the same time he acknowledges to have had a large Soul, a sharp Judgment, and a *Genius* for *Heroick Poetrie*, perhaps above any that ever writ since *Virgil*. For no question but his following an unfaithful Guide, his Rambling after Marvellous Adventures, his making no conscience of Probability, and almost all his other faults pro-

The PREFACE.

proceeded from one and the same Cause, namely, his neglect of following the Rules of Poetry. The same may be said of Sir William D'Avenant, and Mr. Cowley: For all the Defects *Rymer* charges them with, are wholly owing to the same Cause. 'Tis likewise upon this very account that the Pieces of our *Dramatick* Poets, which are reckon'd to be the best performances of the present Age, can scarce any of them stand the Test of a Judicious Eye: And a Man of sense that knows the *Art of Poetry*, and has read the Performances of former Ages, cannot but pity the conceited Ignorance and perverse Pride of our *Modern Poets*, who scorn to be confin'd to the *Rules of Art*. They have been told of this often and often, but they think their own Wit is the best Judge in the Case; and as long as 'tis so there is no hopes of any Amendment, or of any great Productions in Poetry. I know they bring several Objections against Writing according to the Rules, but they are so trifling that I think it not worth while to examine them here: Besides, all their Objections, at least the weightiest of them, have been stated, examin'd, and refuted in the *Preface before the last Translation of Terence's Comedies*; so that I am sufficiently excus'd from that needless Task.

I shall shut up all that has been said on *Epick Poetry*, with giving you the Thoughts of a very eminent Person of Quality of this present Age and Nation; who seems to have comprehended all that has been said on this Subject in these few Verses.

By Painsful Steps we are at last got up
Parnassus Hill, on whose bright Airy Top
The Epick Poets so divinely show,
And with just Pride behold the rest below.
Heroick Poems have a just pretence
To be the utmost reach of Humane Sence,

The PREFACE.

*A Work of such inestimable Worth,
 There are but Two the World has yet brought forth,
 Homer and Virgil: With what awful sound
 Do those meer Words the Ears of Poets wound!
 Just as a Changling seems below the rest
 Of Men, or rather is a two-leg'd Beast:
 So these Gigantick Souls amaz'd we find
 As much above the rest of Humane Kind.
 Nature's whole strength united! Endless Fame,
 And Universal Shouts attend their Name.
 Read Homer once, and you can read no more,
 For all things else appear so dull and poor,
 Verse will seem Prose, yet often on him look,
 And you will hardly need another Book.*

[The Earl of Mulgrave's Essay on Poetry.]

After what has been said in favour of *Epick Poetry*, it may be expected I should say something in behalf of my *Author*, and give the World some account of the Reasons that induc'd me to Translate it: But before I do either, I must beg leave to premise a word or two, which to the more Judicious may not seem to be a Digression.

To *Criticise* upon any Author, is no such easie matter as some may imagine: But to pass a true and impartial Judgment upon the Writings of the *Poets*, may be justly reckon'd one of the hardest parts of *Criticism*. Every little Pretender is not fit for such an Undertaking. It requires a large but regulated Fancy, a sound, solid, and penetrating Judgment, deep, piercing, and steady Thoughts, a long and obstinate Course of Study, much and certain Experience, a clear and perfect insight into Poetry and all its parts; but above all, the utmost stretch of Humanity and good Nature. Every one that reads *Homer* and *Virgil*, cannot be presum'd to understand them perfectly: Nor are all that understand these Authors to be admitted as competent Judges of their

The PREFACE.

their Excellencies and Failures. They must first be Masters of the foremention'd Qualities, and then they may begin to *Criticise* and *Reflect* upon what they read and thorowly understand. Then they will be able to separate the Dross from the Or, to discern the false glittering of the Tinsel from the true Lustre of the Jewel, and to know what is praise-worthy and what is not.

How Synonymous soever the words may seem at first hearing, yet unquestionably there is as much difference between *Censuring* and *Criticising*, as there is between a corrupted, ill-natur'd, and a fair impartial Judge. A little Wit, arm'd with a great deal of Malice, will go a great way towards the composing a *Censurer*: Such a one, I mean, that Carps at ev'ry thing he meets with, that would find faults where there are none, and take some sort of Complacency and Delight in magnifying the smallest slips of an Author. But now the true *Critick* is quite another thing; he brings all he reads and reflects on to the *Criterion* of right Reason, and to the Standard of Truth. What is excellent and beautiful, he not only acquits, but highly applauds and commends: What is weak he does all he can in justice to conceal or defend; and like a compassionate Judge, 'tis with some sort of Reluctance and Regret that he is forc'd at last to pass a *Black Sentence* upon the most Criminal Pieces. Such a *Critick* as this is of vast use to the Commonwealth of Learning, not only for encouraging and countenancing the *Good*, but likewise for discouraging and deterring the *Bad Writers*: Since the *Excellencies* of the one will be sure to meet with a due esteem; and the *Faults* of the other will in spite of the *Criticks* good Nature, fall under a just and severe Censure. This is that Notion I have of a true and accomplish'd *Critick*; All others may be term'd *Censurers*, *Carpers*, *Momus's*, or by what other Name of ignominy you please to give them, but are by no means to be

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THE PREFACE.

allow'd competent Judges of any Author's Writings.

This sort of Learning was in no small esteem among the Ancients; as is manifest from the many Curious Reflections and useful Criticisms, which Aristotle and Longinus among the Greeks, Horace and Petronius among the Latins (not to mention any more) have left behind them. Of latter date the Italians and Spaniards have set up for great Criticks; but those among them that have prov'd best, are such as have follow'd the Rules and Precepts of Aristotle and Horace, and other great Masters of Antiquity; whilst others that have invent'd any thing of their own, have come off with less Judgment and Applause. Among the English, there have been but few that merit the Name of Critick, in that Sense I take the Word. Most of them are only Criticks in the worst Sense; that is, such as expose the Faults, but take no notice of the Excellencies of Authors. The Judicious Rymer, who seems to have a particular Talent for Criticising, yet in my Opinion falls short of being a true Critick: And if he will still dispute that Title with the World, yet he must be contented with being reckon'd one of the meaner sort; since 'tis more difficult and honourable to discern and commend the Excellencies, than 'tis to find out and expose the Failings of Shakespear, Fletcher, or any other Author. At present the French, since the great encouragement they at first receiv'd from the Learned Richlieu, seem to be uppermost in this sort of Learning: And how dull and insipid soever they are said to be in other parts, yet in Criticisms they are full of curious Thoughts, and refin'd Reflections. Rapin, in all the Reflections he has made, comes off with universal Applause; but those on Aristotle's Poesie seem the most Correct of any. He has reflected on all the parts of Poetry, and descends to the more minute and lesser pieces of it; which is something more than Aristotle himself has left us.

As

The PREFACE.

As for my Author, whom *D'Acier* in his Notes upon *Aristotle's Poësie* calls the *Ingenious and Judicious Bossu*; he, I say, has enlarg'd himself upon only one part of *Poësie*, to wit, the *Epick*. And herein he ties himself strictly to a Method, which he as strictly pursues. He professes at the very first, to have follow'd the Rules and Precepts of *Aristotle* and *Horace*, and the Practice of *Homer* and *Virgil*. Upon such sure grounds as these he builds all his Notions; and having such Masters and Patterns to go by, Who can doubt of his Success? What he takes from *Aristotle* and *Horace*, he explains, improves, and refines: What is his own, though never so judicious and rational, he lays down not in a Dogmatical Magisterial way, but by way of Problem: And what he asserts with an Air of Confidence, though not his Masters Thoughts, yet seem to be natural Deductions from what they have wrote about it. 'Tis not to be question'd, but in many Things he dissents from most Mens Opinions; but 'tis to be hop'd, no judicious Person will condemn him till he has seriously weigh'd his Reasons, and consider'd the Arguments he uses to maintain his Cause: and then if our *Critic* can be convinc'd of any Error, he is too modest not to submit to the Suffrage of better Judgments. But if, on the other hand, he has Reason on his side, it may with Justice be expected, that he will be a means of opening the Eyes of a great many unprejudic'd Persons.

His main Deligh of writing these *Reflexions* was, as he tells us himself, for the sake of those that read *Virgil*; and to such I dare affirm, that this *Treatise* will be of more Use than all the Notes and Comments they have hitherto seen. They are usually stuff'd with idle and unprofitable *Remarks* upon *meer Words*; but this full of ingenious *Criticisms* upon the most weighty and important *Things*. How well he has discharged himself, those who carefully read over this Tract of his,

The PREFACE

his, will no doubt discover; and they will without doubt from thence form a nobler Idea of *Virgil*, and his Design, than hitherto they have conceiv'd. If he seems, like his Country-men, to be too Verbose, 'tis only upon the account of his studying to make all things as plain and as intelligible as may be; and whether that be a real Fault, I leave others to judge. Beside the useful *Reflexions* he makes upon the Conduct of *Virgil* in particular; you will find many others of no less use upon the Practice of *Homer*, and upon *Epic* Poetry in general; and now and then some that will give you no small Light into the other two Parts of Great Poetry, *Tragedy* and *Comedy*. In a word, he has throughout the whole acquitted himself like a true, judicious, and impartial *Critick*. He commends the Excellencies of the Good, and censures the Failings of the Worst Poets with such a Justness and Moderation, as deserves a particular Esteem and Admiration. The *Statius*, *Claudian*, *Lucan*, *Seneca*, and others, fall under his Lash, yet he meddles with their Faults no farther than his Subject requires, and upon occasion he gives them their full Commendations: And on the contrary, tho he bestows on *Homer* and his admir'd *Virgil* very high and large Encomiums, yet they are no more than the most invidious part of the World have allow'd them; and he often blames both when he cannot in Justice excuse their Failings.

'Tis now high time I should give you some Account of the Reasons that induc'd me to the Translating this Author. One, and not the least, is the Excellency and Usefulness of these *Reflexions*, which are too good to be confin'd to a Foreign Language. 'Tis true, *French* is now become fashionable and common, and seems to be as universally studied, as *Latin* was formerly; and ev'ry Pretender to Gallantry and good Breeding, pretends at least to be a perfect Master and Judge of this Language. But however, I believe the
Language

THE PREFACE

Language is not so familiar, but by a modest Comparison it may be affirm'd, That a tenth part of those that read *Homer* and *Virgil*, understand but very little of it. To such as these, this Translation may be of some Use; and perhaps others who think they already understand the *French Tongue*, may be glad to see so beneficial a Treatise in a more familiar and intelligible Language.

Another Reason that inclin'd me to this Undertaking is, the Notice I receiv'd that *Virgil* was now ready to be Translated into *English* by an eminent hand. Before therefore that that Translation came out into the World, I could not but think it proper and useful to offer it in by the *Reflections* of so able a Critick. And perhaps it may be of some Use to the Understanding *Virgil*, when read in our Mother-Tongue. Besides, it has the Fortune to come out just after *Dr. Blackmore's Poem*, and may be of great Use to those who have an Inclination to Poetry; for by it they will be able to judge of this *English* Poet.

As for the *Translation*, you must not expect a verbal one; for to that I neither think my self nor any body else oblig'd. I have kept as nigh my Author's Sence as possible; and perhaps some may think I have follow'd him too close. However, I did all I could to render him with all the Perspicuity which a *Didactic* Stile requir'd: and if that be granted me, I have all I aimed at. Some Terms of Art which *Bossu* borrow'd from the *Greek*, I was oblig'd to retain as I found them: but doubtless, whoever attentively reads what he has said about them, will soon find them to be no Mystery. The *Citations* in the *Margent* (as many as I thought good to make use of) are all left in their *Original* Languages: but such as are in the *Text*, I thought would appear best in *English*, unless when the Subject requir'd the contrary. For this purpose, some I made bold to borrow from the Translations that were ready done

The PREFACE.

done to my hands by several, Wits of the Age: Of the rest, some I Translated my self; and others more difficult, I got an ingenious Friend of mine to turn for me.

This is all the Account I think fit to give you of my Reasons for Translating *Bossu*, and of the Method I have taken therein. Whatever Pains and Precaution I have us'd, I do not expect I shall please every body, and 'tis a Wonder if I should. Some will censure the Author, others the Translation, and a third sort perhaps, stirr'd up with a generous kind of Envy call'd *Emulation*, will either endeavour to Translate it better themselves, or else vent some new Notions of their own. However it happen, the World will be the better for it, and my Author and I shall have this Satisfaction, That the Commonwealth of Learning will be then engag'd to thank us not only for our own mean, but even for their more elaborate Productions.

THE

THE CONTENTS.

BOOK I.

Of the Nature of the *Epick Poem*; and of
the *Fable*.

- Chap. I. **T**HE Design of the whole Work. Page 1.
Chap. II. What is the Nature of the
Epick Poem. p. 2.
Chap. III. The Definition of the Epick Poem. p. 6.
Chap. IV. Of the Parts of the Epick Poem. The Divi-
sion of this Treatise. p. 8.
Chap. V. Of the Poem. p. 9.
Chap. VI. Of the Fable. p. 13.
Chap. VII. The Method of Composing a Fable. p. 15.
Chap. VIII. Of the Fable of the Iliad. p. 17.
Chap. IX. A Comparison of the Fable of the Iliad with
that of Æsop. p. 21.
Chap. X. The Fable of the Odyſſeis. p. 23.
Chap. XI. Of the Fable of the Æneid. p. 26.
Chap. XII. Horace's Thoughts of the Epick Fable. p. 31.
Chap. XIII. Aristotle's Thoughts of the Epick Fable. p. 34.
Chap. XIV. Of Real Actions, the Recitals whereof are Fa-
bles. p. 39.
Chap. XV. Of Feign'd Actions, the Recitals whereof are
Historical. p. 41.
Chap. XVI. Of the Vicious Multiplication of Fables. p. 43.
Chap. XVII. Of the Regular Multiplication of Fables. p. 47.
Chap. XVIII. The Conclusion of the First Book. p. 50.

BOOK

The Contents.

BOOK II.

Concerning the Subject-Matter of the *Epick Poem*, or concerning the *Action*.

- Chap. I. **W**hat the Subject-Matter of the *Epick Poem* is. P. 53.
- Chap. II. Episodes consider'd in their Original. P. 57.
- Chap. III. An Explication of the foregoing Doctrine, by an Instance. P. 59.
- Chap. IV. Of the several sorts of Episodes, and what is meant by this Term. P. 61.
- Chap. V. Concerning the Nature of Episodes. P. 64.
- Chap. VI. The Definition of Episodes. P. 67.
- Chap. VII. Of the Unity of the Action. P. 69.
- Chap. VIII. Of the Faults which corrupt the Unity of the Action. P. 74.
- Chap. IX. Of the Integrity of the Action. P. 79.
- Chap. X. That the Action ought to be a Whole. P. 81.
- Chap. XI. Of the Beginning, Middle, and End of the Action. P. 85.
- Chap. XII. Of the Causes of the Action. P. 89.
- Chap. XIII. Of the Intrigue, and the Unravelling thereof. P. 92.
- Chap. XIV. The Way of Forming the Plot or Intrigue. P. 95.
- Chap. XV. How to dispose or prepare the Unravelling. P. 98.
- Chap. XVI. Of the several sorts of Actions. P. 101.
- Chap. XVII. Of the Conclusion of the Action. P. 103.
- Chap. XVIII. Of the Duration of the Action. P. 107.
- Chap. XIX. Of the Importance of the Action. P. 110.

BOOK III.

Concerning the Form of the *Epick Poem*; or, concerning the *Narration*.

- Chap. I. **O**f the Parts of the Narration. P. 113.
- Chap. II. Of the Title of the *Epick Poem*. P. 116.
- Chap. III. Of the Proposition. P. 117.
- Chap.

The Contents.

Chap. IV. <i>Of the Invocation.</i>	p. 123.
Chap. V. <i>Of the Body of the Poem, or the Narration, properly so called.</i>	p. 127.
Chap. VI. <i>How the Narration is pleasant.</i>	p. 128.
Chap. VII. <i>Of Probability.</i>	p. 132.
Chap. VIII. <i>Of the Admirable, or the Marvellous.</i>	p. 137.
Chap. IX. <i>Of the Passions.</i>	p. 140.
Chap. X. <i>How the Narration ought to be Active.</i>	p. 145.
Chap. XI. <i>Of the Continuity of the Action, and the Order of the Narration.</i>	p. 149.
Chap. XII. <i>Of the Duration of the Narration.</i>	p. 154.

BOOK IV.

Concerning the Manners of the *Epick Poem.*

Chap. I. C <i>Concerning the Manners in General.</i>	p. 159.
Chap. II. <i>Of the Causes of the Manners.</i>	p. 161.
Chap. III. <i>Concerning the Manners of other Sciences besides Poetry.</i>	p. 166.
Chap. IV. <i>Of the Manners of Poetry.</i>	p. 169.
Chap. V. <i>Whether the Hero of the Poem ought to be an honest Man, or no?</i>	p. 173.
Chap. VI. <i>Of the Poetical Goodness of the Manners.</i>	p. 177.
Chap. VII. <i>Of the three other Qualifications of the Manners.</i>	p. 180.
Chap. VIII. <i>Of the Character of the Personages. Aristotle's Words about it.</i>	p. 186.
Chap. IX. <i>Of the Characters of Achilles, Ulysses, and Æneas.</i>	p. 191.
Chap. X. <i>Of the Character of the other Personages.</i>	p. 194.
Chap. XI. <i>What the Character is.</i>	p. 197.
Chap. XII. <i>Of the Unity of the Character in the Hero.</i>	p. 199.
Chap. XIII. <i>The Unity of the Character in the Poem.</i>	p. 202.
Chap. XIV. <i>Of the Justness of the Character.</i>	p. 205.
Chap. XV. <i>Of False Characters.</i>	p. 211.

The Contents.

BOOK V.

Concerning the *Machines*.

Chap. I.	O F the several sorts of Deities.	p. 215.
Chap. II.	Of the Manners of the Gods.	p. 218.
Chap. III.	How the Gods act in a Poem.	p. 222.
Chap. IV.	When one must make use of Machines.	p. 225.
Chap. V.	How the Machines are to be used.	p. 228.
Chap. VI.	Whether the Presence of the Gods is any Disparagement to the Heroes.	p. 230.

BOOK VI.

Concerning the *Thoughts* and the *Expression*.

Chap. I.	T He Foundation of this Doctrine.	p. 235.
Chap. II.	Concerning Descriptions.	p. 239.
Chap. III.	Of Comparisons or Similes.	p. 244.
Chap. IV.	Concerning Sentences.	p. 247.
Chap. V.	Concerning disguis'd Sentences.	p. 251.
Chap. VI.	Concerning several other Thoughts.	p. 257.
Chap. VII.	Of the Expression.	p. 260.
Chap. VIII.	How one ought to judge of the Elocution of a Poem.	p. 263.
	D'Acier's Essay upon Satyr.	p. 267.
	Monsieur Fontanelle upon Pastorals.	p. 277.

ERRATA.

PAge 2. Line 34. read *Of Epick Poets*. p. 9. l. 12. for *Morals* r. *Manners*. p. 10. l. 24. r. *Regimens*. p. 14. l. 29. r. *Of the Fable*. p. 28. l. 18. r. *so much as desiring*. p. 29. l. 29. r. *Cutting off his Enemies*. p. 43. l. 24. for *Model* r. *Draughts*. p. 50. l. 11. r. *as an end*. p. 65. l. 16. for *this* r. *that*. p. 72. l. 40. for *the* r. *this*. *King of Kings*. p. 110. l. 11. r. *Obligation*. p. 112. l. 10. r. *Ilus*. p. 121. l. 31. r. *Glaring*. p. 138. l. 29. for *yes* r. *lie*. p. 139. l. 9. for *two* r. *too*. p. 148. l. 33. for *he follows his Advice* r. *whose Advice he follows*. p. 149. l. 15. r. *concerning the Continuity*. p. 151. l. 14. for *two* r. *too*. p. 167. l. *entrepreneur*. r. *that these are not vices*. p. 171. l. 17. r. *relentless*. p. 174. l. 16. r. *to distinguish*. p. 182. l. 35. for *Faces* r. *Phases*. p. 187. l. 4. r. *Valet*. p. 197. l. 23. r. *deceit*. p. 203. l. 15. for *Print* r. *Rein*. p. 208. l. 11. r. *Glaring*. p. 213. l. 12. r. *Raxat*. *ibid*. l. 17. r. *and to break down Bridges*. p. 214. l. ult. r. *Spaces*. p. 217. l. 13. r. *ann*. p. 218. l. 34. r. *in this sort of Writing*. p. 226. l. 1. for *learns* r. *leave*. p. 245. l. 26. r. *to an Amazon*. p. 250. l. 10. for *begul* r. *be felt*. p. 263. l. 26. for *Projections* r. *Propositions*.

Monsieur

Monfieur *Boffu's* Treatife
OF THE
EPICK POEM.

BOOK I.
*Of the Nature of the Epick Poem;
and of the Fable.*

CHAP. I.

The Design of the whole Work.

ARTS, as well as *Sciences*, are founded upon *Reason*, and in both we are to be guided by the *Light of Nature*. But in *Sciences*, neither the *Inventors*, nor the *Improvers* of them, are to make use of any other Guides but this *Light of Nature*: Whereas on the other hand, all *Arts* depend upon a great many other things, such as the *Choice* and *Genius* of those, who first invented them, or of those who have labour'd at them with an Universal Applause.

Poetry is of this Nature: And tho' *Reason* might have first founded it, yet it cannot be deny'd but that the *Invention* of *Poets*, and the *Choice* they have been pleas'd to make, have added thereto both its *Matter* and *Form*. 'Tis then in the excellent Pieces of Antiquity we are to look for the Fundamentals of this Art: And they are only to be rely'd on, to whom all others yield the Glory

of having either practis'd with the most Success, or collected and prescrib'd Rules with the greatest Judgment.

The *Greeks* and *Latins* have furnish'd us with Examples of both kinds. *Aristotle* and *Horace* left behind them such Rules, as make them by all Men of Learning, to be look'd upon as perfect Masters of the Art of Poetry: And the Poems of *Homer* and *Virgil* are, by the Grant of all Ages, the most perfect Models of this way of Writing, the World ever saw. So that if ever a Just and Supreme Authority had the Power to prescribe Laws and Rules to any Art, one cannot question but these four Persons had all Authority on their side, with respect to the *Epick Poem*. And this is the only kind we shall treat of at present.

'Tis true, the Men of our Times may have as much *Spirit* as the Ancients had; and in those things which depend upon *Choice* and *Invention*, they may likewise have as just and as lucky *Fancies*: But then it would be a Piece of Injustice to pretend that our new Rules destroy those of our first Masters; and that they must needs condemn all their Works, who could not foresee our Humours, nor adapt themselves to the *Genius* of such Persons as were to be born in after-Ages, under different Governments, and under a different Religion from theirs; and with Manners, Customs, and Languages, that have no kind of relation to them.

Having no Design then by this Treatise to make *Poets* after the Model of our Age (with which I am not sufficiently acquainted) but only to furnish my self with some sort of Foundation in the Design I have of explaining the *Aeneid* of *Virgil*; I need not concern my self with every new Invention of these last Times. I am not of Opinion, that what our late Authors think is universal Reason, and such a common Notion as Nature must needs have put into the Head of *Virgil*. But leaving Posterity to determine whether these Novelties be well or ill devis'd, I shall only acquiesce in what I think may be prov'd from *Homer*, *Aristotle*, and *Horace*. I will interpret the one by the Other, and *Virgil* by all Three, as having the same *Genius* and *Idea* of the *Epick Poessie*.

C H A P. II.

What is the Nature of the Epick Poem.

THE most considerable difference my Subject presents me with between the Style of the Ancients, and that of the last Ages, is, That our way of Speaking is plain, proper, and without

out the *Turn*: Whereas theirs was full of Mysteries and Allegories. The Truth was mask'd under these ingenious Inventions, which for their Excellence go under the name of *Fables*, or *Sayings*; as if there were as much difference between these fabulous Discourses of the *Wise*, and the ordinary Language of the *Vulgar*, as there is between the Language that is proper to *Men*, and the Sounds brute *Beasts* make use of to express their *Passions* and *Sensations*.

At first the *Fables* were employ'd in speaking of the *Divine Nature* according to the Notion they then had of it. This sublime Subject made the first *Poets* to be stil'd *Divines*, and *Poetry* the *Language of the Gods*. They divided the *Divine Attributes* as it were into so many *Persons*; because the *Infirmity* of a *Humane Mind* cannot sufficiently conceive, or explain so much *Power* and *Action* in a *Simplicity* so great and indivisible as is that of *God*. And perhaps they were jealous of the *Advantages* they reap'd from such excellent and refin'd *Learning*, and which they thought the vulgar part of *Mankind* was not worthy of.

They could not tell us of the *Operations* of this *Almighty Cause*, without speaking at the same time of its *Effects*: So that to *Divinity* they added *Physiology*, and treated thereof, without quitting the *Umbrages* of their *Allegorical Expressions*.

But *Man* being the chief and the most noble of all the *Effects* which *God* produc'd, and nothing being so proper, nor more useful to *Poets* than this Subject, they have added it to the former, and treated of the *Doctrine of Morality* after the same manner as they did that of *Divinity* and *Philosophy*: And from *Morality* thus discours'd of, has *Art* form'd that kind of *Poem* and *Fable*, which we call the *Epick*.

What the *Divines* made their *Divinity*, that did the *Epick Poets* make their *Morality*. But that infinite Variety of the *Actions* and *Operations* of the *Divine Nature* (to which our *Understanding* bears but little proportion) did as it were force them upon dividing the single *Idea* of the only one *God* into several *Persons*, under the different Names of *Jupiter*, *Juno*, *Neptune*, and the rest. And on the other hand, the *Nature of Moral Philosophy* being such as never lays down a *Rule* for any particular thing, the *Epick Poets* were oblig'd to unite in one single *Idea*, in one and the same *Person*, and in an *Action* that appear'd singular, all that look'd like it in different *Persons*, and in various *Actions*, which might be thus contain'd as so many *Species* under their *Genus*.

Therefore when *Aristotle* speaks to this purpose, That *Poetry is more serious than History*, and that *Poets are greater Philosophers than Historians* are: He does not only speak this to magnifie the Excellence of this *Art*, but, to in-

* φιλοσοφώτερον ἢ ἱστορίαν
ἐκείνου Πόλιτος ἔπος
as ὅτι. *Poet. c. 9.*

* Οὐ γὰρ ἀλλ' ἡ Ποίησις
ὁμιλεῖται ἐπιπιδεμένη. I-
bid.

form us also of the Nature of it. * *Poesie*, says he, teaches *Morality* not by Recital only as an *Historian*, who barely tells us what *Alcibiades* for Instance (Tis *Aristotle's* own Instance) did or suffer'd: But by proposing whatever a Person, let the Poet call him by what name he pleases, ought either necessarily, or in all probability, to have said or done upon that or the like occasion? 'Tis in this Nature that the Poet lays down the bad Consequences of an ill-grounded Design or a wicked Action; or else the Reward of good Actions, and the Satisfaction one receives from a Design form'd by *Vertue*, and manag'd by *Prudence*.

† Ἡ μὲν Ποίησις μᾶλλον
τὰ καλὰ, ἢ τὰ ἱστορίαι
τὰ κατὰ ἕκαστον, λέγει. I-
bid.

Thus in the † *Epopæa*, according to *Aristotle*, let the Names be what they will, yet the Persons and the Actions are Feign'd, Allegorical, and Universal; not Historical and Singular.

* Quicquid fit pulchrum,
quid turpe, quid utile,
quid non, Plenius &
melius Chryippo & Cran-
tore dicit. *Epist. Lib. 1.*
Ep. 2.

Horace is likewise of the same mind, as we shall see hereafter. Only by the way we cannot but observe, that he not only says * that Poets teach Men *Morality* full as well as *Philosophers*, but in that he even gives *Homer* the Pre-eminence.

† Ποιήσεις πάντας τυχόν-
των ὅσαι μιμήσεις τὸ σὺ-
νελον. *Arist. Poet. c. 1.*

The reason Poets are more excellent here- in than the plain downright *Philosopher*, is this, † that every sort of Poem is in general an Imitation. Now Imitation is extreme- ly natural, and pleases every body: By which means this way of proposing things is more charming, and more proper to take with an Audience. Besides Imitation is an Instruction by Examples; and

* Κατὰ φύσιν δὲ ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἡ-
μῶν τῶν μιμήσει, ἐξ ἀρ-
χῆς οἱ πρῶτος πρὸς αὐ-
τὰ μάλιστα, καὶ μικρὸν
ὑποχρῶντες ἑαυτοῦ τὴν
ποίησιν, ἐκ τῶν αὐτοῦ δι-
δασμάτων. *Poet. c. 4.*

Examples are very proper to persuade; since they prove such or such a thing is feasi- ble. In short, * Imitation is so far the Essence of Poetry, that it is Poetry it self, as *Aristotle* the first Founder of this Art tells us: And † *Horace* recommends it very parti- cularly to the Poet he would create.

† Respicere exemplar viræ morumq; jubebo Doctum Imitatorem, & veras hinc ducere Voces. *Hor. Art. Poet.*

But tho Poets play the Moral Philosophers, yet still they are no less Divines. The *Morality* they deal withal, does indispensibly oblige them to have a Vein of Divinity run thro all their Works: Because the Knowledge, the Fear, and the Love of God; in a Word, Piety and Religion, are the chief and solidest Foundations of other Vertues, and of all *Morality*.

Book I. of the Epick Poem.

5

The Presence of the Deity, and the Care such an August Cause ought to take about any Action, obliges the Poet to represent this Action as great, important, and manag'd by * Kings and Princes. It obliges him likewise to think and speak in an elevated way above the Vulgar, and in a Style that may in some sort keep up the Character of the Divine Persons he introduces. † To this end serves the Poetical and Figurative Expression, and the Majesty of the Heroick Verse.

* Res gestæ regumque
Ducumque. Hor. Art, Poet.

† Cui mens divinior atque
os Magna sonaturum des
Nominis hujus honorem.
Horat.

But all this, being divine and surprizing, may quite ruine all Probability: Therefore the Poet should take special care as to that Point, since his chief aim is to instruct, and without Probability any Action is less likely to perswade.

To all this the Poets are oblig'd by the substance of the Things they propose to themselves as the subject Matter of their Poems and Instructions. The manner of teaching them usefully and methodically, has likewise oblig'd them to add several other Rules.

The Epopœa's business is with the Morals and Habitudes more than the Passions. These rise on a sudden, and their Heat is soon over; but the Habitudes are more calm, and come on, and go off more leisurely. Therefore the Epick Action cannot be contain'd in one single day, as the Dramatick can: It must have a longer and more just space allow'd it, than that of Tragedy, which is only allow'd for the Passions.

This Distinction makes the Tragedy and the Epopœa differ very much. The violence of Tragedy requires a great deal more lively and brisk Representation than that of a Recital: besides it is all Action, and the Poet says never a Word, as he does in the Epopœa, where there are no Actors.

But if in this the Epopœa is inferiour to the Drama, yet 'tis superiour to both Philosophy and History: because 'tis a great deal more active than bare Philosophy, and the Recitals of History: And tho' it does not present Actors to the Eyes of the Spectators, yet it ought at least more frequently than Historians, to break off the Thread of its Discourse by the Speeches of its Personages. This Aristotle orders, when he says, that the Narration of the Epick ought to be Dramatick, that is to say, very active.

It has likewise its Passions, which give it no small Advantage over Philosophy and History: But in this it is inferiour to Tragedy. For tho' it has a mixture of all the Passions, yet Joy and Admiration are the most essential to it. These indeed contribute most towards the making us wise Men: Admiration and Curiosity are the Cause of Sciences; and nothing engages us so forcibly as Pleasure. So that these two Passions must never be wanting to any invented Piece, if we would be inform'd in what we are indispensibly oblig'd to know.

* Quicquid præcipies esto brevis, ut citò dicta Percipiant animi dociles, te-neantq; fideles. *Hor. Poet.*

† Denique sit quodvis simplex duntaxat, & unum. *Ibid.*

To conclude, because the Precepts had need be * concise, that so they may be more easily conceiv'd, and less burden the Memory; and because nothing can be more effectual thereto, than proposing one single *Idea*, and collecting all things so well together, that so they may be present to our Minds all at once, the *Poets* have reduc'd all to one † single Action, under one and the same Design, and in a Body whose Members and Parts should be homogeneous.

CHAP. III.

The Definition of the Epick Poem.

THAT which we have observ'd concerning the Nature of the *Epic Poem*, gives us a just Idea of it, which we may express thus:

“The *EPOPEA* is a Discourse invented by Art, to form the Manners by such Instructions as are disguis'd under the Allegories of some one important Action, which is related in Verse, after a probable, diverting, and surprizing Manner.

This here is the Definition of the *Epopea*, and not of *Poetry* it self. For that is an Art of making all sorts of Poems, of which the *Epic* is but a part. The *Epopea* then is not an Art, but an artificial thing, as 'tis express'd in the Definition, which says 'tis a Discourse invented by Art.

It is likewise one sort of *Poem*, as 'tis intimated in the Definition by its being call'd a Discourse in Verse: And the rest distinguishes it from all other sorts of *Poems*.

* Περὶ πάντας γὰρ μιμῶνται, καὶ δρῶντες ὁμιλοῦν καὶ δράματα καλεῖται τινες αὐτῶ οἱ ποιηταί, ὅτι μιμῶνται δρῶντες. *Arist. Poet. c. 3.*

The Action of *Comedy* is not very important; and besides the * *Poet* says nothing, but only the Persons he introduces, say and act All, just as in *Tragedy*. For this reason both This and That is stil'd a *Dramarick Poem*. And thus it is plain the *Epopea* is neither *Tragedy* nor *Comedy*.

Nor is it a piece of *Natural Philosophy*, as the Poems of *Empedocles* and *Lucretius*: Nor a Treatise of Husbandry, and the like, as the *Georgicks* of *Virgil*: Because these Pieces are not design'd to form Men's Manners, and the Instructions contain'd in them are naked, simple, and proper, without Disguise and Allegorics.

This

This second reason, which more especially concerns the Essence and Nature of Poesy, does likewise exclude from the number of *Epick Poems*, any Piece of *Morality* writ in Verse, and a plain *History*, such as *Lucan's Pharsalia*, the *Punick War* of *Silius Italicus*, and such like real Actions of some singular Persons without a *Fable*, and in short every thing that is describ'd in Verse after this manner.

I shall not trouble my head to take notice how the *Epopée* differs from the *Satyr*, the *Eclogue*, the *Ode*, the *Elegy*, the *Epigram*, and other lesser Poems: For this is self-evident.

But it will not be amiss to reflect upon what has been already said, and from thence to conclude that the *Epopée* has some relation to Four Things; viz. to the *Poem*, to the *Fable*, to *Moral Philosophy*, and to *History*.

It has a relation to *History*, because as well This as That relates one or more Actions: But the Actions of *History* are singular and true, so that the *Epopée* is neither a *History*, nor a Species of *History*.

It has a necessary relation to *Morality*, since both one and the other instructs Men in their Morals; but the Action and the Allegories which are proper to it, is the cause why properly speaking it is not *Moral Philosophy*, although it may be stil'd a Species of it; and in short, it has a great deal more relation to this than to *History*.

But it belongs altogether to the *Poem* and the *Fable*, since it is properly and truly a *Poem* and a *Fable*; and is only distinguish'd from other Poems and Fables, as several Species, which equally partake of the same Genus, are distinguish'd from one another. Besides, the Definition does exactly include both, since a *Poem* is a Discourse in Verse, and a *Fable* is a Discourse invented to form Men's Morals by Instructions disguis'd under the Allegories of an Action. So that one might abridge the Definition we have given of the *Epick Poem*, and only say, that it is a *Fable* gracefully form'd upon an important Action, which is related in Verse after a very probable and surprising manner.

C H A P. IV.

Of the Parts of the Epick Poem. The Division of this Treatise.

THE Parts of the *Epick Poem* contain'd in the former Definition are its *Nature*, its *Matter*, its *Form*, and its *Manner of proposing Things*.

Its *Nature* is twofold; for the *Epopée* is both a *Fable* and a *Poem*. But these two several *Genus's* agree very well together, and compose a *Body*, that is no *Monster*. One may likewise very well separate these two *Natures* from one another, and say, that the *Fable* is that which constitutes the *Nature* of the *Epopée*; and that the *Poem* tells us how to manage the *Fable*, and comprehends the *Thoughts*, the *Expression*, and the *Verse*.

The *Matter* of it is an *Action* feign'd with probability, and drawn from the *Actions* of *Kings*, *Princes*, and *Gods*. This tells us two *Things*, the *Action* and the *Persons*, and therein it does not at all differ from *Tragedy*.

The *Form* of it is, that the *Persons* are not here introduc'd to the *Spectator's* view, acting by themselves without the *Poet*, as in *Tragedy*: But that the *Action* is recited by the *Poet*.

The *End* of the *Epick Poem* is to lay down *Moral Instructions* for all sorts of *People* both in *general* and in *particular*. This part belongs to the *Poem* as it is a *Fable*. It contains the *Moral* which serves for the *Foundation* of the *Fable*; and besides that it contains the *Manners* of those *Personages* who make some considerable *Figure* in the *Poem*.

Lastly, as the *Form* includes the *Person* of the *Poet* who makes the *Rehearsal*: So does the *End* comprehend the *Persons* of the *Audience* for whom the *Poet* designs his *Instructions*.

All these *Things* will make up the *Subject-Matter* of this *Treatise*: But 'tis not necessary they should be all handled with the same particularity and exactness.

Some will very naturally fall under others, as that will, for instance, which we have to say concerning the *Poet* and his *Audience*.

To treat of the *End* and the *Moral* a-part would require too vast a *Compass*; I shall content my self to speak thereof in speaking of the *Fable*, and in other *Places*, where the necessary connexion of that *Part* with the rest will afford me just *Occasions* of speaking as much of it as is requisite for my purpose.

Aristotle divided the *Thoughts* and *Expressions* into two *Parts*, as was very requisite: But so many *Authors* have handled these *Things*,

Things, and so copiously too, that I think my self excused from repeating and copying those Things, which are under the Jurisdiction of other Arts. I will leave these Things then to the *Rhetoricians*, *Grammarians*, and to those who have writ so much about them even in *Poetry* it self. So that the little I have to say will be compris'd in one part. And my Unwillingness to be copious, is the Reason which obliges me to speak still less of the *Poem* and *Verse*ification.

But I shall write very fully of the *Fable*, as being the most essential part of the *Epopea*. So likewise I shall concerning its *Form*, and its *Matter*. Nay more, I shall handle distinctly the *Morals* of the Persons. And lastly, I shall distinguish the *Gods* from the *Men*. The *Gods* are usually express'd by the Name of *Machines*, because the Poets make use of such to let them down upon the Theatre; from whence the *Epopea* has likewise borrow'd the Name.

According to this Account, this Treatise will be divided into six Parts or Books.

The *First* will be concerning the *Nature* of the *Epick Poem*, where we shall treat of the *Fable*.

The *Second* Book will treat of the *Matter*, or of the *Epick Action*.

The *Third* of the *Form*, or the *Narration*.

The *Fourth* of the *Manners* and *Characters* of *Humane Personages*.

The *Fifth* of *Machines*, or of the *Presence* and *Action* of the *Gods*.

And the *Sixth* of the *Thoughts* and *Expressions*.

CHAP. V.

Of the Poem,

A Poem is a Discourse in Verse; and a Verse is a part of a Discourse measur'd by a certain number of long and short Syllables, with a grateful Cadence, that is constantly repeated. This Repetition is necessary to distinguish the Notion we have of Verse, from that of Prose. For in Prose as well as Verse, every Period and Clause are so many parts of a Discourse measured by a certain number of long and short Syllables; but Prose is ever and anon altering its Cadences and Measures, which Verse never does.

The Repetition, which the Poets make use of, seems still the same in the way of Writing: for, when one Verse is finish'd, they come back again to the beginning of another Line to write the next Verse. And this coming back again, is that which gives
 ¶ *Verſus*. it the Name of ¶ *Verſus*; and this Name in Latin is common to Verses, and several other things that are rang'd, as they are, in different Lines; as Trees, for instance, which are set in Rows.

The *Latins* call Verses likewise by the Name of *Carmina*; but this is an Equivocal Term: for besides its signifying Verses, or Poems, it may be used to express other things. 'Tis a Term that is given to the

* *Ramque sedens anile-
mobile Carmen instaret.
Virg. Geor. 4. † Ducite
ab urbe domum, mea
Carmina, ducite Daph-
nim. Carmina vel cœlo
possunt deducere lunam.*

* Singing of Birds, to the † Charms of Magic, to certain † Forms of Law, to ¶ In-
 scriptions or Devices, to ** Epitaphs, and
 other such like things.

*Carminibus Circe socios mutavit Ulyssis. Ecl. 8. † Lex horrendi Carminis erat:
Dulmoxiri perduellionem judicent, si à Duumviris provocacione certarit, provoca-
cione cœtato, &c. Tit. Liv. Hist. 1. 1. ¶ Rem Carmine signo: Æneas hæc de
Danaïs Victoribus Armis. Virg. Æneid. 1. 3. * Tumulo superaddidit Carmina;
Daphnis ego in sylvis hinc usque ad sidera notus, Formosi pecoris cultos, formosior
ipse. Virg. Ecl. 5.*

For the making of Verses, 'tis not enough to take care of the Measure and Quantity of the Syllables, and to place six Feet just after one another in the same Line; there must be likewise some grateful Cadences, of which there are several Rules laid down in treating about *Cæsura's*, *Synalepha's*, the Length of Words, and the like. Besides this, there must be some Tenses of Verbs, some Moods, some Regiments, some Constructions, and some Words proper only to Verse, and which Prose knows nothing of.

But above all, there must be in Verse the Turn, and some ways of speaking that are elevated, bold, and metaphorical; which are so proper to this kind of Writing, that without them the most exact placing of long and short Syllables is not so much Verse as Prose in Metre: And, on the contrary, these bold Expressions, so proper to Verse, when used in a Discourse that has not Feet nor Poetical Numbers, do give it such an Air of Verse, that it is not so properly Prose, as a kind of Poësie without Numbers, and as *Horace* says, *Disjecti Membra Poetae*.

As * *Nature* does not inspire into us the Rules of Poetry and Verse; so neither does Art and Study help us to that Air, that Force, and that Elevation, in which *Horace* discovers something that is Divine, and which only makes a Man deserve the Name of Poet. This is an Accomplishment a Man should be born with, owing either to the

Excel-

Excellency of his Nature, or to some happy Transports; but with-
all so extraordinary, that the *Ancients*, and
† *Aristotle* himself, Rile them Fits of En-
thusiasm or Frensie: yet still there is to
be supposed an exact and solid Judgment
to master this Frensie and Imagination of the Poet.

† Εὐφροσύνη καὶ Πάθος ἐκ-
τὸ μανικόν. Arist. Poet.
cap. 17.

From what has been said, we may conclude that the *End* of
Poetry is to please: that its *Cause* is either the Excellency of the
Poet's Nature, or the Poetick Frensie, and these Transports of
Spirit, that are to be govern'd by Judgment. Its *Matter* is the
long and short Syllables, the Numbers it is made up of, and the
Words which *Grammar* furnishes it with, as well as Prose. And
its *Form* is the ranging of all these Things in such exact and
charming Verses, as may best express the Thoughts of the Author
after the manner we have been describing.

But after all, how confin'd is all this, if we consider the great
Name of Poet in the Honour *Homer* and *Virgil* did it, and in
all the Extent it is capable of! What we have said about it has
nothing of Praise-worthy in it, but what ev'ry pitiful Translator
may pretend to, and what the War of *Catalans* turn'd into Verse
might bestow upon him, that would transpose the Prose of *Sal-
lust* after this manner. 'Tis with Reason then that we distinguish
these mean Subjects from great Poetry, by giving them the name
of *Versification*; and that we make, as it were, two distinct Arts
of *Versification* and *Poetry*. In a word, there is as much Diffe-
rence between the Art of Making Verses, and that of Inventing
Poems, as there is between *Grammar* and *Rhetorick*.

This great Art consists chiefly in the *Fable*, in the manner of
Expressing Things by Allegories and Metaphors, and in the Inven-
tion of some probable Matter; that is, of some Actions, under
which the Poet very charmingly disguises the Truths he would
have us learn. This is so proper to the Poet,
that even in the Expression † *Aristotle* re-
commends nothing so much as the *Meta-*
phor. Which agrees very well with that

† Το δὲ μύησις καὶ μετα-
φορίζεσθαι. Poet. c. 22.

which we have already said about the Nature of Poetry. For the
Fables are so many Allegorical Disguises, and an Allegory is no-
thing else but a Series and Chain of Metaphors linked together.

We shall speak of the *Fable*, and these important Matters in
the Sequel of this Treatise. We shall here only make this one Re-
flection; That the true Poems, and such as have more of the Es-
sence and Nature of Great Poetry than any other, are the *Epos*,
the Tragedy, and the Comedy; for they are all Allegorical and
Fabulous. Nor has * *Aristotle* in his Poetry

* Ποιῶν μὲν δὲ τὴν ἑκαμύ-
νην μίμησιν, καὶ οὐκ

καμυδίας ὡς ἐστὶν ἱρῶδες. Περὶ τῆς Τραγῳδίας λόγους. Poet. c. 6.

three sorts. If we compare them together, the *Epopea* will excel the other two by that great Liberty it takes of using Metaphors and perpetual Allusions in the Fables. Allegorical Expressions would be more obscure upon the Stage, and would have something that is less probable in the Mouth of the Actors we hear speak, than in the Narration of a Poet, who writes purely to be read. *Comedy* must likewise yield to *Tragedy*, because it has little of Elevation, and the manner of its Actors Speaking, is too Natural and Familiar.

† Idcirco quidam Comœdia necne Poema esset quaesivere: quod acer spiritus ac vis nec Verbis nec rebus inest, nisi quod pede certo differt sermoni sermo Merus. *Hor. Lib. 1. Sat. 4.*

This very Thing has made some People question whether † *Comedy* were a true Poem or no. Which Difficulty is wholly grounded upon this general Notion, That a Poem is a Discourse in Verse. Now in the *Latin Comedy*, the Discourse has nothing in it of Verse, but Feet and Numbers. This indeed is enough for such a Poetical Subject as *Comedy* is. And we suppose in this we are of *Horace's* Opinion, at least he attributes this Doubt to a very few Persons.

But this measure only, without any Air to distinguish the Discourse from Prose, makes no Verses: And for this Reason has ‡ *Horace* call'd his *Satyrs* by a Prose Name; viz. *Sermons*. His *Epistles* are the same. His *Odes* are of a different Air, and these he calls by a Poetical Name, *Carmina*.

¶ Primum ego me illorum dederim quibus esse Poetas, Excerptam numero; neque enim concludere Versum Dixeris esse satis; neque si quis scribat uti nos Sermoni propiora, putes hunc esse Poetam. *Ibid.*

The Case is not the same with Subjects that are not Poetical, but writ in Verse, and adorn'd with Fables and Allegories; as, the *Georgicks* of *Virgil*, *Lucan's Pharsalia*, the *Punick War* of *Silius Italicus*, and the like. The truth on't is, these Fables and Allegories are not sufficient for an *Epopea*, and its main Action, that ought to be a *Fable*; so that we do not take the *Georgicks* or the *Pharsalia* to be an *Epopea*; but yet this should not hinder us from thinking them to be true Poems for all that.

But if a Man writes an *Epopea* in Prose, would it be an *Epick Poem*? No, I think not; for a Poem is a Discourse in Verse. But yet this would not hinder its being an *Epopea*; just as a *Tragedy* in Prose is still a *Tragedy*, though it be not a *Tragick Poem*. They who have question'd whether the *Latin Comedy* were a Poem or no, never doubted but it was a *Comedy*.

I should have said less upon such trite Matters, but that I was asham'd to take no notice at all what a Poem or a Verse was, being to treat so largely about the *Epick Poem*.

CHAP. VI.

Of the Fable:

* **A**ristotle says, *The Fable is the principal Part of the Poem, and that 'tis as it were the very Soul of it.* Therefore we must look for the *Nature* of the *Epopéa* in that of the *Fable*, and consider *That* as the chief Foundation of the Poem, as the Principle that gives Life and Motion to all its parts, and sets all its Faculties on work. We have indeed begun to define the *Epopéa* by the Definition we gave of the *Fable*; for the *Fable* is a Discourse invented to form Mens Manners by Instructions disguis'd under the Allegories of one single Action.

There are several sorts of *Fables*, which one may treat after very different ways. The *Poet* forms his from that which is most excellent in each of these sorts.

There are reckon'd three sorts of *Fables*. The first fall under the Names of Men and Gods, and are call'd *Rational*; the second are only compris'd under the Names of Beasts, and derive their Name of *Morata* from the humane Manners, which are attributed to them; and the last are a Mixture of these two sorts of Personages, and are call'd *Mix'd*.

The *Epick Fables* are *Rational*. Nor do I think that the Liberty *Homer* has taken of making a Horse speak only once in his *Iliad*, ought to make this *Fable* be counted a *mix'd* one. I should rather reckon this incident among the *Machines* and *Miracles*; as we read in the *Roman History* it sometimes happen'd, and as we know it did in *Balaam's Ass*.

Besides, 'twas such a common thing in those times to make use of these sorts of *Fables*, and to bring in brute Beasts, and even Trees speaking: and this Custom was so generally look'd upon as a Mark of Learning, a Genius, and Eloquence; that had *Homer* us'd it oftner, I do not see how any one could blame this *Fable* for any Irregularity. But in short, this Custom of making Beasts speak is so little relish'd by these last Ages, that even *Homer's* Example would not make it excusable in any of our modern Writers.

However 'tis, this inconsiderable Incident, which does not hinder but the *Epick Fable* may be reckon'd among the *Rational* ones, will not hinder it from being plac'd among the *Probable* ones; though this Qualification be not at all necessary for the *Fable in general*.

In fine, the Action of a *Fable* may be serious, great, and important, or familiar, low, and vulgar. It may be either perfect or defective; writ in Verse or Prose; swell'd to a large Discourse, or express'd in a few Words; recited by the Author, or represented by the Persons who are the sole Actors in it. And all these different ways make no Alteration in the Essence, and in the Nature of the *Fable*.

Excepting the Representation, which the *Epick Poet* leaves the Stage to be Master of, he takes always the most excellent, and the most noble Method. So that the *Epick Action* is grave, important, compleat, and rehearsed in a long train of Verses.

One may add to this, that there are some *Fables* which consist less in Action than in Speaking; as that *Fable*, for instance, which ridicules the foolish Vanity of those Men, who attribute all the Glory of an Event to themselves, for the producing of which they contributed nothing but their own unprofitable Presence. The *Fable* represents them under the Allegory of a *Fly*, which lighting upon a Chariot, and seeing her self in the midst of a Cloud of Dust, which the Chariot-Wheels and the Horse-Feet raised in the Air, cries out; *O Gemini! What a Dust do I make?* The *Epick* is not of this sort of *Fables*, but of those which imitate an Action.

These then are the Differences which specify the *Epick Fable*, and distinguish it from all others. It is *Rational* and *Probable*; it imitates an Action that is compleat and important; it is long and rehears'd in Verse; but neither of these Properties change its *Nature*, nor make it less a *Fable*, than those which are publish'd in *Æsop's* Name.

So much for the Sorts and Differences of the *Epick Fable*, now for its Parts.

* *Aristotle* says, that the *Fable* is a Composition of several Things. And in truth two Things do compose it, which are as it were its two essential Parts. The one is *Truth*, which serves as a Foundation to it; and the other is *Fiction*, which Allegorically disguises this *Truth*, and gives it the Form of a *Fable*.

The *Truth* lies conceal'd; and is that piece of *Morality* the Poet would teach us. The *Romans* made use of this very Expression, when they said to † *Teach Fables* and *Tragedies*, instead of saying to *Act* and *Represent* them. The *Fiction* is the Action or the Words, whereby these Instructions are veil'd. In the Instance we just now propos'd, the *Truth* is this, that it is ridiculous to brag of any thing we have no hand in: and the *Fiction* is that pleasant Thought of a Fly riding upon a Chariot,

* Λίγος ὅς τ' ἰσχυρὸν πλὴν
 συνθεὶς τῶν ἀντιθέτων.

† Vel qui Prætextas, vel
 qui docere Togatas. Hor.
 Poet.

a Chariot, and crying, *Bless me! what a Dust do I make?*

The *Truth* lies under no Difficulty here, since the *Moral* Instruction ought always to be true.

"But suppose the imitated Action be taken out of *History*, "would this pass for a *Fiction*? The Difficulty is the same, if it "be taken from a *Fable* that is already known, since after this "manner, the Poet would as little invent and feign it, as if he "had found it in *History*: And yet if the Author feigns nothing, "we may well dispute with him the Name of Poet.

To this we answer, that the Poet ought to feign one General Action; then he should look for the Names of some Persons (to whom a parallel Action has either truly or probably happen'd) in *History*, or some well-known *Fables*: And lastly, he ought to place his Action under these Names. Thus it will be really feign'd and invented by the Author, and yet will seem to be taken out of some very ancient *History* and *Fable*. This we shall explain by what follows: we will begin to do so by the Instance of a *Fable* compos'd after this Method.

CH A P. VII.

The Method of Composing a Fable.

THE first thing we are to begin with for Composing a *Fable*, is to chuse the Instruction, and the point of Morality, which is to serve as its Foundation, according to the Design and End we propose to our selves.

I would, for Instance, exhort two Brothers, or any other Persons, who hold an Estate in Common, to agree well together, the better to preserve it: And this is the End of the *Fable*, and the first thing I thought on.

For this purpose I endeavour to imprint upon their Minds this Maxim; *That a Misunderstanding between Friends is the ruin of Families, and of all sorts of Societies.* This Maxim which I make choice of, is the Point of Morality, and the *Truth* which serves as a Foundation to the *Fable* I would compose.

In the next place this *Moral Truth* must be reduc'd into Action, and a general Action must be feign'd in Imitation of the true and singular Actions of those who have been ruin'd by a Misunderstanding that has happen'd among them. I say then, that several Persons were engaged together to look after an Estate, which they hold in Common. They fall out with one another, and this Difference leaves them defenceless to the Will of an Enemy who ruins them.

This

This is the first *Platform* of a *Fable*. The *Action*, which this *Recital* presents us with, has four *Qualifications*: it is *Universal*, it is *Imitated*, it is *Feign'd*, and it contains *Allegorically*, a *Moral Truth*. This *Model* then comprehends the two *Essential Parts* which compose the *Fable*, viz. the *Truth* and the *Fiction*. All this is common to all sorts of *Fables*.

The Names that are given to the *Personages* do first specify a *Fable*. *Aesop* gives them the Names of *Beasts*. "Once upon a time (says he) two *Dogs* were set to keep a *Flock* of *Sheep*, they fight with one another, and leave the *Sheep* without Defence to the *Mercy* of the *Wolf*, that commits what *Ravage* he pleases among them. These Names are the meanest of any. The *Action* is still *General*, and the *Fiction* is altogether apparent.

We may disguise the *Fiction*, render the *Action* more singular, and make it a *Rational Fable* by the Names of *Men* invented at *Pleasure*. "Pridamant and Orontes, two *Brothers* by a second Marriage, were left very rich by their *Father's* last *Will* and *Testament*. They could not agree in sharing their *Estate*, and were so obstinately bent one against the other, that to provide for their common *Interest* against *Clitander* (their elder Brother by a former Marriage) was the very least of their care. He very dextrously foments their *Quarrel*, and keeps them from minding the *Design* he has upon them, by pretending he expected nothing but a small *Gratuity* by the *Accommodations*, which he daily proposes, but never urges home to them. In the mean time he gains upon the *Judges*, and all others, who were intrusted with this *Affair*; he procures the *Will* to be cancell'd, and becomes *Master* of all that *Estate* he pretended he would have gratified his *Brothers* with, though to his own prejudice.

This *Fable* is a *Rational* and *Probable Fable*; but because the Names are feign'd as well as the *Things*, and the *Action* is only particular, and the *Families* ordinary, it is neither an *Epick* nor *Tragick Fable*; and can only be manag'd in *Comedy*. For * *Aristotle* informs us, That *Comick Poets* invent both the Names and the Things.

* Συνησάμενος γὰρ ὁ ποιητής, διὰ τῶν εἰρησίων, ὅπου τὰ τυκόντα ὀνόματα ἐκτελεῖται.
Poet. c. 9.

In order to make this an *Alamode Comick Fable*, some *Girl* or another should have been promised to *Clitander*; but the *Will* should have put the *Father* upon altering his *Design*, and he should have oblig'd her to have married one of these two rich *Coxcombs*, for whom she had, not the least *Fancy*. And here the *Comical Part* might have been carried on very regularly even as the *Poet* pleas'd. But to return.

The *Fiction* might be so disguis'd under the *Truth of History*, that those who are ignorant of the *Poet's Art* would believe that he

he had made no *Fiction*. But the better to carry on this Disguise, search must be made in *History* for the Names of some Persons to whom this feign'd Action might either *Probably* or *Really* have happen'd; and then must the Action be rehears'd under these known Names, with such Circumstances as alter nothing of the Essence either of the *Fable* or the *Moral*: as in the following Example.

" In the War King *Philip* the Fair had with the *Flemings* in
 " the Year 1302, he sent out his Army under the Command of
 " *Robert* Earl of *Artois* his General, and *Ralph* of *Nesle* his Con-
 " stable. When they were in the Plain of *Courtray* in sight of the
 " Enemy, the Constable says, *'Twas so easie to starve them, that*
it would be advisable not to hazard the Lives of so many brave
Men against such vile and despicable Fellows. " The Earl very
 " haughtily rejects this Advice, charging him with Cowardice and
 " Treachery. *We will see,* replies the Constable in a rage, *which*
of us has the most Loyalty and Bravery: and with that away
 " he rides directly towards the Enemy, drawing all the French
 " Cavalry after him. This Precipitation, and the Dust they rais'd,
 " hinder'd them from discovering a large and deep River, beyond
 " which the *Flemings* were posted. The French were miserably
 " cast away in the Torrent. At this Loss the Infantry were so
 " startled, that they suffer'd themselves to be cut in pieces by the
 " Enemy.

'Tis by this means that the *Fiction* may have some Agreement with the *Truth* it self, and the Precepts of the Art do not contradict one another, though they order us to begin by feigning an Action, and then advise us to draw it from *History*. As for the *Fiction* and *Fable*, it signifies little whether the Persons are *Dogs*, or *Oronics* and *Pradamont*, or *Robert d'Artois* and the Earl of *Nesle*, or lastly *Achilles* and *Agamemnon*.

'Tis time we should now propose it in its just Extent under the two last Names in the *Iliad*. It is too narrow for an *Epopée* under the former Names.

C H A P. VIII.

Of the Fable of the *Iliad*.

THE *Fable* of the *Iliad*, at the bottom, is nothing else but that which I just now propos'd. I will treat of it here at large, because I cannot give you a greater light into this Doctrine, than by the Practice of *Homer*. 'Tis the most exact Model of the *Epopée*, and the most useful Abridgment of all the Precepts of this Art;

since in truth, *Aristotle* himself has extracted them out of the Works of this great Poet.

In every thing which a Man undertakes with Design, the *End* he proposes to himself is always the first thing which occurs in his Mind, and upon which he grounds the whole Work, and all its parts. Thus, since the *Epick Poem* was invented to form the Manners of Men, 'tis by this first View the Poet ought to begin.

The *School-men* treat of Vertues and Vices in general. The Instructions they give are proper for all sorts of People, and for all Ages. But the Poet has a nearer Regard to his own Country, and the Necessities he sees his own Nation lie under. 'Tis upon this account that he makes choice of some piece of Morality, the most proper and fittest he can imagine: and in order to press this home, he makes less use of Reasoning, than of the force of Insinuation; accommodating himself to the particular Customs and Inclinations of his Audience, and to those which in the general ought to be commended in them. Let us now see how *Homer* has acquitted himself in all these Respects.

He saw the *Grecians*, for whom he design'd his Poem, were divided into as many States as they had Capital Cities. Each was a Body Politick, and had its Form of Government independent from all the rest. And yet these distinct States were very often oblig'd to unite together in one Body against their common Enemies. And here we have two very different sorts of Government, such as cannot be very well comprehended in one Body of Morality, and in one single Poem.

The Poet then has made two distinct *Fables* of them. The *One* is for all *Greece* united into one Body, but compos'd of Parts independent on one another, as they in truth were: and the *Other* is for each particular State, consider'd as they were in time of Peace, without the former Circumstances, and the necessity of being united.

As for the first sort of Government observable in the Union or rather in the Assembling of many Independent States: Experience has always made it appear, "That there is nothing like a due Subordination, and a right Understanding between Persons to make the Designs that are form'd and carried on by several Generals to prosper. And on the other hand, an universal Misunderstanding, the Ambition of a General, and the Under-Officers refusing to submit, have always been the infallible and inevitable Bane of these Confederacies. All sorts of States, and in particular the *Grecians*, have dearly experienc'd this Truth. So that the most useful and the most necessary Instructions that could be given them, was, to lay before their Eyes the Loss which both the People and the Princes themselves suffer'd by the Ambition and Discord of these last.

Homer then has taken for the Foundation of his *Fable* this great *Truth*; viz. *That a Misunderstanding between Princes is the Ruin of their own States.* "I sing (says he) the Anger of *Achilles*, so pernicious to the *Grecians*, and the Cause of so many Heroes Deaths, occasion'd by the Discord and Parting of *Agamemnon* and this Prince.

But that this *Truth* may be compleatly and fully known, there is need of a second to back it. For it may be question'd, whether the ill Consequences which succeed a Quarrel were caused by that Quarrel; and whether a right Understanding does re-adjust those Affairs which Discord has put out of Order: that is to say, these Assembled States must be represented first as labouring under a Misunderstanding, and the ill Consequences thereof; and then as United and Victorious.

Let us now see how he has dispos'd of these Things in one General Action.

"Several Princes, independant on one another, were united against a Common Enemy. He, whom they had Elected their *General*, offers an Affront to the most Valiant of all the Confederates. This offended Prince was so far provok'd, that he withdrew himself, and obstinately refused to fight for the Common Cause. This Misunderstanding gives the Enemy so much Advantage, that the Confederates are very near quitting their Design very dishonourably. He himself who is withdrawn is not exempt from sharing in the Misfortunes he brought upon his Allies. For having permitted his intimate Friend to succour them in a great Necessity, this Friend is kill'd by the Enemies *General*. Thus being both made wiser at their own Cost, are reconcil'd. And then this Valiant Prince gets the Victory, and revenges his own Wrongs by killing with his own hands him who had been the Death of his Friend.

This is the first *Platform* of the Poem, and the *Fiction*, which reduces into one important and universal Action, all the Particulars upon which it turns.

In the next place it must be render'd *Probable* by the Circumstances of *Times*, *Places*, and *Persons*; that is to say, If we would come up to the Precepts of our Masters, we must seek for some Persons already known by *History*, or other ways, by whom we may with Probability represent the Personages of this *Fable*. Homer has made choice of *the Siege of Troy*, and feign'd that this Action happen'd there. He has given the Name of *Achilles* to a valiant and angry Phantom; that of *Agamemnon* to his General, that of *Hector* to the Enemies Commander, and others to the rest, as is to be seen in his Poem.

Besides, he was oblig'd to accommodate himself to the Manners, Customs, and Genius of the *Greeks* his Auditors, the better to make

make them attend to the Instruction of his Poem, and to gain their Approbation by praising them, as far as the Faults he must of necessity make his Personages fall into, would admit. He admirably discharges all the Duties, by making these Brave Princes, and those Victorious People, to be *Grecians*, and the Fathers of those he had a Mind to Commend.

But in that Length and Extent which is given to these *Fables*, if we would not stuff up the rest with useless Ornaments and foreign Incidents, we must do something else besides proposing the principal point of Morality that is made use of. We must extend this Moral by its necessary Consequences: as for instance, in the Subject before us, 'tis not enough to know, that a good Understanding ought always to be maintain'd among Confederates: 'tis likewise very material to know, that if there happens any Division, great Care is to be taken, that it be kept from the Enemies Knowledge, that so they being ignorant of this Advantage, may not venture to make use of it.

In the second place, when this Concord is but counterfeit, and only in appearance, one should never press the Enemy too closely, nor oblige them to make use of all their Forces: for this would discover the Weakness that ought to be concealed from them.

The *Episode* of *Patroclus* does even to Admiration furnish us with these two Instructions. For when he appear'd in the Arms of *Achilles*, the *Trojans*, who took him for *Achilles* himself, now reconciled and re-united to the Confederates, gave ground, and quitted the Advantages they had over the *Greeks*. But *Patroclus*, who should have been contented with this Success, presses upon *Hector* too boldly, and by obliging him to fight, discovers that it was not the true *Achilles* that was clad in his Armour, but a much more feeble Hero. So that *Hector* kills him, and re-gains the Advantages which the *Trojans* had lost upon the Conceit that *Achilles* was reconcil'd.

'Tis by such sort of *Fictions* that this great Poet has fill'd his Poem with Instructions so excellent for their Design, and whereby he has merited those Praises which *Aristotle*, *Horace*, and all the *Ancients* have bestow'd upon him.

C H A P. IX.

A Comparison of the Fable of the Iliad, with that of Æsop.

THE better to make it appear that an *Epopea* is a true *Fable*; and that this Term we give it is not Metaphorical or Figurative, but Proper and Natural; and that the Sense is the same, as when we give the Name of *Fables* to the *Fictions* of *Æsop*: I shall here draw a Parallel between the *Fable* of the *Iliad*, and that of *Æsop*, which I have already mention'd.

First then I say, that the *Moral Truth* and *Instruction* is apparently the same in both. *Æsop* and *Homer* would have us learn, that a misunderstanding between those of the same Party, exposes them to the *Insults* of their *Enemies*, and their own *Ruin*: and that *Concord* preserves and renders them *Victorious*.

The *Fiction* is likewise the same. Both have feign'd a Confederacy of several Persons together, for the Maintenance and Defence of their Interest against the Common Enemy. Again, both have feign'd some disturbance that happen'd at first in this Union; and that those who quarrell'd met with an equal share of misfortune. Lastly, both have restor'd to the Party of these United Persons, the Concord and Victory which was the consequence of their Re-union.

There's nothing remains now but to give Names to those feign'd Persons. As for the Nature of the *Fable*, it matters little whether the Names of *Beasts* or of *Men* be made use of. *Homer* has made choice of these last; and has given the Quality of Kings to his Personages. He has call'd them *Achilles*, *Agamemnon*, *Hector*, *Patroclus*, and has expressed by the name of *Grecians*, that Interest which the Confederates were obliged to maintain. *Æsop* in his way, has given the Names of *Beasts* to all his Personages: The *Dogs* are the Confederates, the *Wolf* is their Enemy, and he has called the *Sheep*, what the Poet has term'd the *Grecians*.

One says, "That whilst the * Confeder-
" rate Kings quarrell'd, *Hector* their Enemy
" makes havock of the poor *Grecians*, who
" pay dearly for the Folly of their Princes;
" and when the Allies, mov'd with their Loss, were Reunited, they
" put *Hector* to flight and kill him.

* Delirant reges plestuntur
achivi. Hor. Ep. 2. ad
Lell.

The other says the very same, "That whilst the *Dogs* did bite and
" tear one another, the *Wolf* broke in upon the *Sheep*: and when
" the *Dogs*, seeing the ravage of this Enemy, were good Friends
" again, they made him fly for it, and killed him.

† Fabula quæ Paridis narratur propter Amorem Græcia Barbarie lento collisa duello. *Ibid.*

The *Fable* of *Homer* is a *Rational one*, and that of *Æsop* is not. But this is no reason why one is more or less a *Fable* than the other. † *Horace* calls the *Iliad* a *Fable*, tho' the Names are Human; just as the Stories of *Æsop* are call'd *Fables* under the Names of *Dogs*, *Lyons*, *Jupiter*, *The Frogs*, and the like.

Homer has stretch'd out his *Fable* by long Harangues, by Descriptions, by Similitudes, and by particular Actions: In like manner, might one amplify that of *Æsop* without spoiling it. One need only relate what provok'd these *Dogs* to quarrel, and to describe the rise of their Anger with all its Circumstances: To make fine Descriptions of the *Plain* where the *Sheep* were feeding, and of some neighbouring *Forest*, which serv'd the *Wolf* for a shelter and Retreat: To give this Enemy some little Cubs to breed up, to make them follow their Sire in the Quest of their Prey, and to describe the Booty they take at several times.

One should not likewise omit the *Genealogy* of these *Heroes*. The *Wolf* should boast of his Descent from *Lycaon*; and one of the *Dogs* should have issu'd in a direct line from the great *Celestial Dog*, and the *Canicula*. This should be the *Hero* of the Poem, for he would be very hot and Cholerick. He would do well to represent the Personage of *Achilles*; and the Folly of a certain *Ajax* his Kinsman, would be a handsom Proof of this Nobility, and of an Origin so Divine as that is. There is no need of any thing farther to engage Heaven in this Quarrel, and to divide the Gods into Parties. For the Gods have as much to do in the *Republick* of *Æsop*, as in the *States* of *Homer*; witness *Jupiter*, who was so far concern'd as to appoint Kings over the Common-wealth of the *Frogs*.

And here we have matter enough to give this Subject a very large extent, provided we have Expressions to answer it, and take care to insert as often * as *Homer* has:

* Edita ne brevibus pereat mihi charta libellis, Dicatur potius, τὸν δ' ἀπαμειβόμενον. *Martial*. L. 1.

τὸν δ' ἀπαμειβόμενον προσέφη πόδας ὠκὺς.

For this fine Epithet for a *Dog*, πόδας ὠκὺς, a *Fleet-runner*, ought by no means to be omitted.

In short, *Homer* does likewise resemble *Æsop*, in that he as well as the other had a great mind to make the *Beasts* speak in the person of *Xanthus* the Horse of *Achilles*.

We conclude then, that the Name of *Fable* which is given to the *Fable* of the *Iliad*, and that of *Æsop*, is neither *Equivocal* nor *Analogous*, but *Synonymous* and equally *Proper*; that all the *Qualities* which make any difference between them, do by no means affect either the *Foundation*, the *Nature*, or the *Essence* of the *Fable*, but only constitute the different sorts of it; and lastly, that if a *Fable* be

Rational,

Rational, Probable, Serious, Important, mix'd with Divinities, Amplified and Rehears'd in Verse, it will be an Epick Poem: If it has not these Conditions, it will be another kind of Fable.

C H A P. X.

The Fable of the Odyssæis.

THE *Odyssæis* was not design'd as the *Iliad*, to instruct all the States of Greece join'd and confederated in one Body, but for each State in particular. A State is compos'd of two parts; The *Head* which commands is the first, and the *Members* which obey make up the other. There are Instructions requisite for the *Governour*, and some likewise necessary for the *Subjects*: for him to rule well, and for them to be rul'd by him.

There are two Vertues necessary to one in Authority; *Prudence* to order, and *Care* to put in Execution the Orders he has given. The *Prudence* of a *Politician* is not acquir'd but by a long experience in all sorts of Business, and by an Acquaintance with all the different Forms of Governments and States. The *Care* of the Execution suffers not him that has order'd it, to rely upon others, but it requires his own Presence; and Kings who are absent from their States are in danger of losing them, and give way to great disorders.

These two Points might be easily united in one and the same Man. * "A King absent from his Kingdom visits the Courts of several Princes, where he learns the Customs of different Nations. From hence there naturally arises a vast number of Incidents, of Dangers, and of Passages, that are very useful for a Political Instruction: And on the other side, this absence gives way to the disorders which happen in his own Kingdom, and which end not till his return, whose sole Presence can re-establish all things. Thus the *Absence* of a King is the same, and has the same effect in this *Fable*, as the *Division* had in the former.

The *Subjects* have scarce any need but of one general Maxim, which is to suffer themselves to be govern'd by, and to obey faithfully some Reason or other which seems to them contrary to the Orders they have received. It were easie to join this to what we have already said, by bestowing on this Wise and Industrious Prince such Subjects, as in his absence would obey, not the Orders they receiv'd, but what appear'd to them more reasonable; And by demonstrating

* Dic mihi Musa virum
captæ post tempora Trojæ,
Qui Mores hominum mul-
torum vidit & urbes. *Hor.*
Poet.

from the Misfortunes this Disobedience draws upon them, the Evil Consequences which almost infallibly attend these particular Conducts, which are distinct from the general Notion of him who ought to Govern.

† Ira quidem communiter urit utrumque.
Hor.

But as 'tis necessary that the Princes in the * *Iliad* should be Cholerick and Quarrelsome: So 'tis necessary in the *Fable* of the *Odysseis* that the chief Personage should be Sage, and Prudent. This raises a difficulty in the *Fiction*; because this Personage ought to be absent for the two reasons aforementioned, which are Essential to the *Fable*; and which constitute the principal part thereof: But he cannot be absent from his own home without offending against another Maxim of equal importance; viz. *That a King should never leave his own Country.*

It is true, there are sometimes such necessities as sufficiently excuse the *Prudence* of a *Politician*: But such a necessity is a thing important enough to supply matter for another Poem, and this multiplication of the Action would have been Vicious. To prevent this, first this necessity and the departure of the *Hero* must be disjoin'd from the Poem: And in the second place, the *Hero* having been oblig'd to absent himself for a Reason antecedent to the Action, and distinct from the *Fable*; he ought not to embrace this opportunity of instructing himself, and so absent himself voluntarily from his own Government. For at this rate, his absence would have been still voluntary, and one might with reason lay to his Charge, the disorders which might have happen'd thereon.

Thus in the constitution of the *Fable*, the Poet ought not to take for his Action, and for the Foundation of his Poem, the Departure of a Prince from his own Country, nor his voluntary stay in any other Place; but his *Return*, and this Return hinder'd against his Will. This is the first Idea the Poet gives us of it. * His *Hero* appears at first in a desolate Island, sitting upon the side of the Sea, which with Tears in his Eyes he looks upon as the obstacle, that had hinder'd him so long from returning home, and visiting his own dear Country.

And lastly, since this forc'd delay has something in it that is most Natural and usual to such as make Voyages by Sea: *Homer* has judiciously made choice of a Prince whose Kingdom was in an Island.

We see then how he has feign'd all this Action, allowing his *Hero* a great many Years, because he stood in need of so many to instruct himself in *Prudence* and *Policy*.

"A Prince had been oblig'd to forsake his Native Country, and
"to head an Army of his Subjects in a Foreign Expedition. Ha-
"ving gloriously perform'd this Enterprize, he was for marching
"home

* Τὸν δ' ἄρ' ἐπ' αἰτῆσι
καθήμενον εἰδὲ πῶς ὅσσιν
ἀπέρχεται τέρποντο καλῆ-
σι δὲ γλυκύς αἶαν
Νέστορ δὲ μομένει.
Odyss. s.

"home again, and thither would have conducted his Subjects. But
 "spite of all the attempts, which his eagerness to return home again
 "put him upon, There are Tempests which stop him by the way
 "for several Years together, and cast him upon several Countries
 "very different from one another as to their Manners and Govern-
 "ment. In the dangers he was in, his Companions, not always
 "following his Orders, perish'd through their own fault. The
 "Grandees of his Country do very strangely abuse his absence, and
 "raise no small disorders at home. They consume his Estate, con-
 "spire to make away with his Son, would constrain his Queen to
 "chose one of them for her Husband, and indulge themselves in all
 "these Violences so much the more, because they were perswaded
 "he would never return. But at last he returns, and discovering
 "himself to his Son and some others, who had continu'd Loyal to
 "him, he is an Eye-witness of the Insolence of his Enemies, pu-
 "nishes them according to their deserts, and restores to his Island
 "that Tranquility and Repose, which they had been strangers to
 "during his absence.

As the *Truth*, which serves as a Foundation to this *Fiction*, and
 which with it makes the *Fable*, is, *That the absence of a Person*
from his own Home, or who has not an Eye to what is done there,
is the cause of great disorders: So the principal Action, and the
 most Essential one, is the *absence of the Hero*. This fills almost
 all the Poem: For not only this bodily absence lasted several Years,
 but even when the *Hero* return'd, he does not discover himself;
 and this prudent disguise, from whence he reap'd so much advantage,
 has the same effect upon the Authors of the Disorders, and all others
 who knew him not, as his real absence had; so that he is absent as to
 them, till the very moment he punish'd them.

After the Poet had thus compos'd his *Fable*, and join'd the
Fiction to the *Truth*, he then makes choice of *Ulysses*, the King of
 the Isle of *Ithaca*, to maintain the Character of his chief Personage,
 and bestow'd the rest upon *Telemachus*, *Penelope*, *Antinous*, and
 others, whom he calls by what names he pleases.

I shall not here insist upon the many excellent Advices, which
 are as so many parts, and natural Consequences of the Fundamental
 Truth; and which the Poet very dexterously lays down in those
 Fictions, which are the *Episodes* and Members of the entire Action,
 such for instance are these Advices: *Not to intrude ones self into the*
Mysteries of Government, which the Prince keeps secret to himself,
 This is represented to us by the Winds shut up in a Bull-hide, which
 the miserable Companions of *Ulysses* must needs be so foolish as to
 pry into: *Not to suffer ones self to be lead*
away by the seeming Charms of an idle and
lazy life, to which the * *Sirens Songs invite*
 Men: *Not to suffer ones self to be sensualliz'd by pleasures, like those*
 who

* Improbable Siren sedition.
 Hor.

who were chang'd into Brutes by *Circe* : And a great many other points of Morality necessary for all sorts of People.

This Poem is more useful to the *Vulgar*, than the *Iliad* is, where the Subjects suffer rather by the ill Conduct of their Princes, than through their own fault. But in the *Odysseïs*, 'tis not the Fault of *Ulysses* that is the ruin of his Subjects. This wise Prince did all he could to make them sharers in the Benefit of his Return. Thus the Poet in the *Iliad* says, "He sings the Anger of *Achilles*, which
 " had caus'd the Death of so many *Grecians* ;
 ‡ *Ἄνθρωποι γὰρ σφετέρησιν* " and on the contrary, in the ‡ *Odysseïs* he
ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὀλοῖτο . tells his Readers, " That the Subjects
Odys. 1. " perish'd through their own fault.

Notwithstanding it is to be confess'd, that these great Names of *Kings*, *Hero's*, *Achilles*, *Agamemnon*, and *Ulysses*, do no less denote the meanest *Burgbers*, than they do the *Cæsars*, the *Pompeys*, and the *Alexanders* of the Age. The *Commonalty* are as subject as the *Grandees*, to lose their Estates, and ruin their Families by Anger and Divisions, by negligence and want of taking care of their business. They stand in as much need of *Homer's* Lessons, as *Kings* ; they are as capable of profiting thereby ; and 'tis as well for the *Small* as the *Great*, that the Morality of the *Schools*, that of the *Fable*, and that of the *Chair* deliver those *Truths* we have been just speaking of.

C H A P. XI.

Of the Fable of the Æneid.

IN the *Fable* of the *Æneid* we are not to expect that *simplicity*, which *Aristotle* esteem'd so Divine in *Homer*. But tho' the Fortune of the *Roman Empire* envied the Poet this Glory, yet the vast extent of the Matter it furnishes him with, starts up such difficulties as require more Spirit and Conduct, and has put us upon saying that there is something in the *Æneid* more Noble than in the *Iliad*. These very difficulties we are to solve, and they call upon us for our utmost care and attention.

There was a great deal of difference between the *Greeks* and the *Romans*. These last were under no obligation, as were the former, either of living in separated and independent States ; or of frequent confederating together against the common Enemy. If in this respect, we would compare our two Poets together, *Virgil* had but one Poem to make, and this ought to be more like the *Odysseïs* than the *Iliad*, since the *Roman State* was govern'd by only one Prince.

But

But (without mentioning the Inconveniencies the *Latin Poet* might meet with in forming a *Fable* upon the same Foundation, which the *Greek* had laid before him) the *Roman* State furnish'd him with Matter different enough to help him to avoid treading in the footsteps of him that went before him, and to preserve to him the glory of a primary invention. *Homer* in the *Odyssæis* spoke only for States already establish'd, and the *Roman Empire* was but of a new date. It was the change of a *Commonwealth* (to which *Cæsar's* Subjects had been always extremely biggoted) into a *Monarchy*, which till then they could never endure. Thus, the Instructions, which the Poet ought to give both to Prince and People, were quite different from those *Homer* left his Countrymen.

He ought to instruct *Augustus* as the Founder of a great Empire, and to inspire into him as well as his Successors, the same Spirit and Conduct which had rais'd this *Empire* to such a Grandeur. A very expert *Roman*, and a great *Politician* (no less than * *Cicero* himself) informs us, " That
 " good Humour and Humanity was so far
 " Essential to this State, that it was predomi-
 " nant even in the very midst of War; and that nothing but an ab-
 " solute Necessity could put a stop to its good effects. And he
 " adds, " That when this Conduct was lost, and this Genius, which
 " gave life to the State, was gone, there was nothing left but bare
 " Walls, and what in propriety of Speech might be term'd a dead
 " Carcase. In short, he shews the Advantages which a mild and moderate Government has over a cruel and severe Conduct, which inspires Men with nothing but a slavish fear.

* *Eventus bellorum erant aut mites, aut necessarii, &c. Cic. 2. de offic.*

This then is the Instruction *Virgil* would give the *Roman Emperors*, who began in the Person of *Augustus* to be settled upon the Throne. This Instruction has two parts, as each of *Homer's* had. The first comprehends the Misfortunes which attend a Tyrannical and Violent Reign: And the second the Happiness, which is the Consequence of a mild Government. *Homer* has plac'd both the parts of each *Fable* in one and the same Person, *Achilles* at first is at variance with the Confederates, and afterwards is reconcil'd to them: *Ulysses* is absent from home, and at last returns thither: and in all this there is nothing of difficulty. But *Virgil* could not represent in one and the same Person, a *Hero*, who by his Violence and Impiety was the Ruin of his Country; and who afterwards by his Piety and Justice, restor'd it to its former Glory. This inequality of Manners and Conduct would have been intolerable, and especially in that Brevity, which the Recital of an *Epic Poem* requires; besides, such a sudden change is never to be rely'd on; Men would think it Hypocritical, and fear a very quick return of the old Tyranny. The Poet then is oblig'd to make use of two different Personages, to maintain the two parts of his exemplary instruction.

Besides,

Besides, several weighty Reasons did indispensibly oblige him to put Humanity and Good-Nature in the Manners of his *Hero*, and to make *Piety* his predominant Quality, and the very Soul of all his Vertues. One of these great Reasons is the desire and necessity he lay under of pleasing his chief Auditor, who alone was more considerable than all the rest. *Augustus Caesar* did nothing to settle himself upon the Throne, but what his *Piety* put him upon undertaking; or at least he had a mind the World should think so. This is the Judgment which the most Prudent past upon him, even after

* Apud prudentes vita ejus variè extollebatur, arguebaturve. Hi Pietate

erga parentem & necessitudine Reip. in qua nullus tunc legibus locus, ad bella Civilia actum: Pauca admodum vi tractata, quo cæteris quies esset. Dicebatur contra: Pietatem erga Parentem, & tempora Reipub. obtentui sumpta. *Hist. Lib. 1.*

he was dead, when he was no longer the subject of Mens Flatteries, or their Fear. This * *Cornelius Tacitus* informs us of.

The Reasons why the Poet spoke thus of the new Establishment, were owing to the *Subjects* of *Augustus*, who made up the other part of the Audience; and the second Object of his Morality. He was oblig'd to make them lay aside the old Antipathy they had to *Monarchy*, to convince them of the Justice, and the legal Prerogative of *Augustus*, to divert them from so much desiring to oppose his designs, and to raise in them a Love and Veneration for this Prince.

Religion has always had a most powerful influence over the minds of the Vulgar. The first *Roman Kings*, and the new *Emperors*, made use thereof, by joyning the *Sacerdotal* to the *Regal Office*. The Poet likewise us'd his utmost care in searching for all the Advantages he could derive from thence, by making it the chief Foundation of his whole design. He makes it appear, "That the great Revolutions, which happen in States, are brought about by the appointment and will of God: That those who oppose them are Impious, and have been punish'd according to their Demerits. For Heaven never fails to protect the Heroes it makes choice of, to carry on and execute its great designs. This *Maxim* serves for the Foundation of the *Æneid*; and is that first part of the *Fable* which we call the *Truth*."

Besides, the Poet was oblig'd to represent his *Hero* free from all manner of Violence, and elected King by brave and generous People, who thought it an Honour to obey him, tho' they might lawfully have been their own Sovereigns, and have chosen what form of Government they pleas'd. In short it was requisite that the Justice of his Cause, like that of *Augustus*, should have been ground'd upon the *Rights of War*.

In a word, the *Hero* should have been like *Augustus*, a *New Monarch*, the *Founder of an Empire*, a *Lawgiver*, a *Pontifex*, and a *great Commander*.

The necessity of reducing all these things into one Body, and under the Allegories of a single Action, makes it appear how great a difference there is between the designs of *Homer*, and that of *Virgil*: And that if the *Latin Poet* did imitate the *Greek*, yet the application of it is so remote and difficult, that it should never make his Poem pass for a new Copy, nor rob him of the glory of the invention.

Let us see then the Collection which *Virgil* has made of all these Matters; and the general *Fiction*, which together with the *Truths* it disguises, makes up the *Fable* and Life of the Poem.

"The Gods preserve a Prince amidst the Ruin of a mighty State,
 "and make choice of him to be the maintainer of their Religion, and
 "the Establisher of a more great and glorious Empire than the first.
 "This very *Hero* is likewise elected King by the general consent of
 "those, who had escap'd the universal Wrack of that Kingdom. He
 "conducts them through Territories from whence his Ancestors
 "came, and by the way instructed himself in all that was necessary for
 "a King, a Priest, and the Founder of a Monarchy. He arrives
 "and likewise finds in this new Country, the Gods and Men dispos'd
 "to entertain him, and to allow him Subjects and Territories. But a
 "neighbouring Prince, blinded by Ambition and Jealousie, could
 "not see the Justice and the Orders of Heaven, but opposes his Estab-
 "lishment, and is assisted by the Valour of a King, whose Cruelty
 "and Impiety had divested him of his States. This opposition, and
 "the War this pious stranger was * forc'd
 "to, renders his establishment more just by
 "the Right of Conquest, and more glorious
 "by the overcoming and cutting off of his
 "Enemies.

* Testaturq; Deos iterum
 se ad prælia cogi. *Æneid.*
 lib. 12.

The model being thus fram'd, there was nothing wanting but to look into *History*, or into some Authentick *Fables*, for *Hero's* whose Names he might borrow, and whom he might engage to represent his Personages. The obligation he lay under of accommodating himself to the Manners and Religion of his Country, invited him to look after them in the *Roman History*. But what Action could he take thence, which might furnish him with a Revolution and Establishment of Government, that was proper to his purpose? *Brutus* had expelled the Kings, and placed the People in that which they then called *their Liberty*: But this Name was Odious and Prejudicial to *Augustus*; and this Action was quite opposite to the Design which the Poet had of confirming the Re-establishment of *Monarchy*. *Romulus* first founded *Rome*, but he laid the Walls thereof in his Brother's Blood; and his first Action was the Murder of his Uncle *Amulius*, for which none could ever find a satisfactory excuse: And then, it was very difficult to suppose these *Heroes* to have taken Voyages.

Besides,

Besides, these two Establishments were made before the Destruction of the States which preceded them, and were the cause of their ruin. The Kingdom of *Alba* flourish'd during the Reign of the two first *Roman Kings*, but was crased by the Third: And *Monarchy* was extirpated by *Brutus*, and his Successors in the *Consulship*. It was of dangerous Consequence, to instil this Notion into the Subjects of *Augustus*, and to put the People upon thinking, that this Prince had ruined the *Commonwealth*, and banished their *Liberty*. The *Truth of History* furnished him with a thought more favourable to his design; since in reality *Cicero* and *Tacitus* do both inform us, "That before this Prince made the least shew of what he was about to do, there was no *Commonwealth* in being. All the vigour of the *Empire* was spent, the Laws were invalid, the *Romans* were

† *Iliaci cineres & Flamma extrema meorum, Testor in occasu vestro, nec tela, nec ullas Vitavisse vices Danaum, & sisata, fuissent, Ut caderem, meruisse matru. Virg. 2. Aeneid.*

"nothing else but the Dregs of a State; and in short, there was nothing left of *Rome* but bare Walls, which were not able to last much longer. Thus *Augustus* destroyed nothing, he only re-established a tottering State. This is what the † Poet is to prove, a great Empire ruin'd, of which his *Hero*

was in no fault; and this very Empire more gloriously re-established by the Virtue, and the good Conduct of the *Hero*.

In the *Roman History*, *Virgil* did not meet with a Prince, who could with any probability keep up the Character of his chief Personage; he was obliged to look out for one some where else. *Homer* had this Advantage, that the *Heroes* of his *Fables* were *Greeks*, and that his own Country was the Theatre whereon most of the Fabulous Actions were transacted: So that he had liberty enough to accommodate himself to the Manners and Religion of those for whom he wrote.

But the *Genius* and *Skill* of the *Latin Poet* helped him to that which *Fortune* denied him. He took *

* *Regius Iliaci Carmen deducis in actus, Quam si praeferes ignota indictaque primus. Poet.*

Horace's Advice, and had recourse to a *Hero* of the *Iliad*: And that he might make this stranger conform to the Religion of the *Romans*, he has feign'd, that the *Hero* came thither to bring into *Italy* all the Ceremonies, and to settle these Gods there, which ever since they have observ'd and ador'd. He has very luckily compleated this Conformity in ‡ the Customs and Manners by making the *Trojans* and *Romans* but one People.

‡ *Sermonem Ausonii patrium moreq; tenebunt. Aeneid. 12.*

And he as well as *Homer* has caused that his Illustrious *Heroes* should be the Fathers of his Auditors; but with this Advantage, that he himself makes the Application of it to his Readers, with an equal measure of *Wisdom* and *Applause*.

Aeneas is his chief Personage, *Turnus* is *Aeneas's* Rival, and in *Mæzæntius* one may observe the Cruelty of a Tyrant, who is at Enmity with both Gods and Men.

To conclude: The Arrival of *Aeneas* into *Italy*, was not invented by the Poet, but handed down by Tradition. † *Cicero*, who wrote before *Virgil*, speaks thereof in his Speech against *Verres* upon the account of the City of *Segesta*. Its Inhabitants gave out that 'twas built by *Aeneas*, when in his Voyage to *Italy*, he staid for some time on the Coast of *Sicily*.

† *Segesta est oppidum per-
vetus in Sicilia, quod ab
Æneâ fugiente à Trojâ,
atque in hæc loca venien-
te, conditum esse demon-
strant. Cicero. in Verrem, iv.*

CHAP. XII.

Horace's Thoughts of the Epick Fable.

TIS time now to join *Aristotle* and *Horace* to *Homer* and *Virgil*, and to see whether the *Thoughts* and *Precepts* of our two *Masters* about the *Nature of the Epick Fable* agree with the *Practice* of our two *Poets*. We will begin with *Horace*.

As for the Word *Fable* there is no difficulty in it; he gives it to the * *Dramatick*, he gives it to the *Epicke Poem*, and in plain Terms calls the † *Iliad* a *Fable*. The business is to know what he means by this Word, and what in his Opinion the *Epicke Fable* is.

* Neve minor quinto, neu
fit productior acta Fabula.
Hor. Poet.

† Fabula quæ Paradis nar-
tatur propter amorem
Græcia Barbariæ lento
collisâ duello. *Epist. ad Lol.*

If it be granted that this kind of *Fable* is of the same Nature with those of *Æsop*, as we just now observed: Then we cannot say that an *Epopœa* is the *Panegyrick* of a *Hero*; of whom is rehearsed some illustrious Action or other; nor that the *Epicke Fable* is only the Disposition of the different Parts of that Action, and of the several *Fictions* with which 'tis garnished.

Three Things may clear up this difficulty: The *first* is the Choice and Imposition of the Names, which are given to the Personages of the *Fable*: The *second* is the Design which the Poet has of teaching Morality under an Allegory: And the *third* is the Virtue and Excellency of the chief Personage.

The *First* is most decisive: For if the Action be feigned, and the *Fable* prepared before the Poet has so much as thought of the Name he is to give to his chief Personage; without doubt he does
not

not undertake the *Elogy* of any particular Man. But we do not find that *Horace* has concerned himself in the business of imposing Names: Therefore we refer this to the following Chapter, where we shall enquire into the Opinion of *Aristotle*.

The Point about Morality is expressly in *Horace*. This Critick is entirely for the way I proposed. He says * "That *Homer* lays down admirable Instructions for the Conduct of Humane Life, and herein prefers the *Iliad* and the *Odyssæis* to the Writings of the most excellent Philosophers. This is self-evident, and having said as much already, we wave saying any more about it: The Reader may consult his Epistle to *Lollius*.

" But what signifies it (may some one say) if *Homer* had a mind to lay down Instructions of Morality? This does not hinder, but he might have made choice of a *Hero* whom he might have praised, and this *Elogy* rightly managed might be a *Fable*. " He was willing then to praise *Achilles* and *Ulysses* as *Xenophon* did his *Cyrus*. Is not this plainly the Design of *Virgil*? " And if *Homer* was less successful, ought we not to pardon the Imperfection of these first Ages, which did not furnish him with those great Ideas of Vertue, and those perfect *Heroes* which after-Ages did produce?

The *Hero* of *Virgil* is indeed a true *Hero* in Morality as well as Poetry; and represents to Kings a compleat Model of all the Vertues which conspire to make a great Prince. This might have given that Idea of the *Epick Fable*, which we are now examining. For the *Æneid* is better read and understood than the *Iliad*. And Men are easily persuaded, that the Design of these less known Pieces is the same with that which they are so well acquainted with. Besides, this Judgment is backed by that noble Idea Men commonly conceive of the Valour of *Achilles*, and of the consummated Prudence of *Ulysses*. These are almost the two only Things which the generality of the World are acquainted with in the *Greek Poems*: Which may have induced them to believe that the *Fables* of *Homer* are the *Panegyrics* of *Achilles* and *Ulysses*.

But if *Horace*, of whom we now speak, had been of this Mind; and if he had believed that the Design of an *Epick Poem*, should be to establish the Merit of a *Hero*, and to propose him to others as a Model of Perfection; it necessarily follows, that either this great Critick was not well acquainted with considerable Defects in the *Heroes* of *Homer*, or else that he did not think *Homer* was a good Pattern to imitate.

Yet we see he knew the one, and believed the other. He knew no Vertue in *Achilles*, nor any Action that deserved Praise. On the contrary, he says, " That in all the *Iliad*, both in the *Grecians*

" † *Camps*

" † *Camp*, and in the City of *Troy*, there
 " was nothing to be seen but *Sedition*, *Trea-*
 " *chery*, *Villainy*, *Lust*, and *Passion*; And
 he never commends *Achilles*, neither for
 his *Valour*, nor for his killing *Hector*, nor for
 any thing else he did against the *Trojans*.

† Seditione, dolis, scelere,
 atq; libidine & ira, Iliacos
 intra muros peccatur &
 extra. *Ibid.*

Yet 'tis evident what an esteem he has for
Homer; and that he carped at no Faults of
 his but * *Peccadilloes*. He would have e-
 very one, that has a mind to be a *Poet*,
 † have *Homer* before him night and day:
 And he proposes the *Achilles* of *Homer* with
 all the Vices, and all the Defects he imputes
 to him, as a great Exemplar for others to
 follow. ‡ He would have him be cholerick,
 inexorable, one who knows nothing of Ju-
 stice, but has all his Reason at his Sword's
 Point.

* Quandoque bonus dor-
 mitat *Homerus*. Verum
 opere isti longo fas est ob-
 repetere somnum. *Hor. Poet.*
 † Vos exemplaria *Græca*
 nocturna versare manu,
 versare diurna. *Ibid.* ‡ Scri-
 ptor honoratum si fortè
 reponis *Achillem*, Impi-
 ger, Iracundus, iners, in-
 exorabilis, acer, &c. *I-*
bid.

'Tis true, to these Qualities he has joined *Vigilancy* and *Zeal* to
 carry on an Enterprize. But these Qualities being in their own
 Nature indifferent, have nothing that is good, but in Persons duly
 accomplished as was *Scipio*. In wicked Persons they are pernicious
 Vices, as in *Catiline*, who made no other use of them but to op-
 press his Country. 'Tis then in this last sence that *Horace* ascribes
 them to *Achilles*, since he would have him be represented, as un-
 just and passionate.

In † *Ulysses* he did discover an Example
 of Vertue: But since, in truth, he does
 equally commend *Homer*, for giving us in
 his two Poems an Example of Vertue, and an
 Example of Vice, should we not conclude,
 that the good or bad Qualities of the chief
 Personages, are not at all necessary nor essential to the *Epick Fa-*
ble; and that *Horace* never thought the *Epopée* was an *Elogy* of an
Hero?

† Rursus quid virtus &
 quid sapientia possit, Uti-
 le proposuit nobis exem-
 plar *Ulysses*. *Ep. ad*
L. II.

That which the *Iliad* and the *Odysseïs* have in common, is, that
 each of them is a Moral Instruction disguised under the Allegories
 of an Action. This is what *Horace* discovers in them; and by
 Consequence each of them, in the Opinion of this Critick, is a *Fable*,
 and such a one as we described it.

CHAPTER XIII.

Aristotle's *Thoughts of the Epick Fable.*

What we have laid concerning the *Fable*, is still more manifest, in the Method and Order which *Aristotle* prescribes for the preparation of the Ground-work of an *Epic Action*. He

does not bid us to search at first in *History* for some great Action, and some *Heroical* Person: But on the contrary, * he bids us to make a *general* Action which has nothing in it particular; to impose Names on the Persons after this first *Fiction*, and afterwards to form the *Episodes*.

For the better conceiving of his Mind, we must take notice what he means by a *general*, what by a *particular Action*. † "There is this difference (lays he) between a *Poet* and an *Historian*, that the *One* writes barely Matter of Fact, (the Other lays down things just as they ought to have been. For this Reason, *Poetry* is more serious and more philosophical than *History*; because *Poetry* tells us of *general Things*, and *History* rehearses *singular Things*. A *general Thing*, is that which either *probably* or *necessarily* ought to have been said or done; and is that to which the *Poet* ought to have a special regard, when he imposes the Names on his Perfo-

" nages. A singular thing is that which *Alcibrades*, for instance,
" has either done or suffered.

The Poetical Action then is neither singular nor historical, but general and allegorical: 'Tis not what Alcibiades has done, but 'tis in general what any one else ought to have done upon the like Occasion.

'Tis a material Point to take notice, that a thing must be done after one way or other, for its being either absolutely good, or for its being only probable, no matter whether it be good or bad. *Xenophon* has feigned the Actions of his *Cyrus* in the first way; and so have all the Poets, who in imitation of him have undertaken to describe the Actions of a great Prince *panegyrically*. On the other hand, the *Hecuba* of *Seneca* should not have made such fine Reflections

Reflections upon the Destruction of *Troy*, and the Death of *Priam*. Not but these Reflections in themselves are very just and useful; but only 'tis not probable, that a Woman lying under such a weight of Afflictions, should have such Thoughts, as were only becoming the Tranquility of a great Philosopher, who had no manner of Interest in the *History* of these ancient Times.

'Tis in this last sence, that *Aristotle* orders Poets to feign their Actions such, as they either probably or necessarily ought to have been. If there still remains any doubt what he means by this Expression, 'tis very easie to give an entire solution of it. One need only consider the Instance of an Action that is just, and feigned regularly by the greatest of all the Poets: 'Tis that of the *Iliad*. Without doubt he knew that the Action of *Achilles*, made choice of by *Homer*, * is the Anger of this *Hero*, so pernicious to the *Greeks*, and not to the *Trojans*. We will not so much as suppose, that this great Philosopher ever thought, that the Extravagancies of a Man, who sacrifices his Friends and his Country to his own Revenge, was an Action any ways commendable, vertuous, or worthy the imitation of Princes. Certainly it had been more for the Honour of *Homer's* Country, if he had sung of the War and the taking of *Troy*. And yet, † *Aristotle* does not only not blame him for forgoing such a glorious Subject, and making choice of a more defective Theme: But he says that herein he has done something that is divine.

* Μῆνιν ἀνὰ θεῶν Πηλεΐ-
δῳ ἄλκιμον ἄλκιον ἔλεγον.
Iliad. i. Iratus Graius quan-
tum nocuisset Achilles?
Horat.

† Διὸς ἄνευρ' ἐπὶ μὲν, ἔδην
ἔχ' τ' αὖτ' ἐν δαίμονος ἀν-
είρου. Ὀρεγες πᾶσι τὴν
ἀλλὰ καὶ μὲν ἔπ' ἐπὶ πολέ-
μοις ἐπὶ πᾶσι πᾶσι δὲ
λεν, ἴν' ὃ ἐν μέγας ἀπὸ
λαβόν, &c. *Poet*. c. 23.

He is then perfectly of the same mind with *Horace*, who would have *Achilles* represented as cholerick, passionate, and unjust; just as *Homer* has made him. But that wherein *Aristotle* is more instructive than *Horace*, is his Method of giving Names to the Personages, that are introduced in a Poem. For how could one prepare the Ground-work of a particular Action of some illustrious *Hero*, that is not feigned; when one does not so much as know whether the *Hero* be *Achilles*, *Aeneas*, *Ulysses*, *Diomedes*, or any other? And yet this is what *Aristotle* orders in the Composition of the *Epic* Fable, when he says, that one should not give Names to Personages till after the Action is invented.

One should indeed do that just before the forming of the *Episodes*: For if those, whose Names we borrow, have done any known Actions; the best way is to make use of them, and accommodate these real Circumstances to the Ground-work of the Fable, and to the Design of the Poet; to fill the *Episodes* with them; and to draw from them all the Advantages possible according to the Rules of Art. This management renders the feign'd Action more pro-

bable,

* Οὐ συζήσεται ἡ ποίη-
σις ὀνόματα ἰκνουμένα.
C. 9.

bable, and may likewise make it look like true History. Besides, *Aristotle* had said, that the Poet in giving particular Names to Persons, which at first he made general, * should take special care to make his Fiction probable:

This Precept is capable of another meaning, which does not at all contradict what has been said, but rather confirms the Doctrine which I proposed: 'Tis this, *viz.* " That when you have feigned an Action, if it be mild and moderate, you must not represent the chief Personage thereof under the Name of *Achilles*, *Tydeus*, *Medea*, or any other whose passionate Tempers are well known.

In this Doctrine, we shall with *Aristotle* meet with three sorts of Actions which the Poets make use of. In the first, the Things and the Names of the Persons are singular and true, and not feigned or invented by the Poet. The † *Satyrists* make use of this sort. In the second, both the Things and the Names are feigned and invented by the Poet; and this is the Practice of *Comedians*. We have laid down an Instance thereof in the Fable we made use of under the Names of *Orontes*, *Pridamant*, and *Clitander*. In the third sort, the Things are invented, but the Names are not. They are noted either by History, or by some Tradition or other. This is manifest in the Fable we proposed under the Names of *Robert Earl of Artois*, and *Ralph Count of Nesle*. We might say the same of the *Iliad*, the *Odysseis*, and the *Aeneid*. This sort of Action is proper for Tragedy, and the *Epopée*.

Nor need we feign Instances to prove these things, or seek for them in Greece and old Italy; since we have enough of them nearer home, in the *Satyr*s, the *Comedies*, and the *Tragedies*, which are daily to be seen in the World.

This Doctrine of *Aristotle* is so important, that it deserves to be consulted in the Original. After he had informed us that the Poetical Action is not singular, but general and universal; and after he had explained what he means by these Terms, as we observed at the beginning of this Chapter, he then goes on after this manner:

† " This in Comedy is very manifest.
" For after the Poet has prepared his Fable,
" upon what is probable, he then gives his

† Ἐπὶ μὲν ὅτι τὰς Κομ-
δίας ὁδὸν τὴν τοῦ ὁμοίου γί-
γναι. Συζητῶντες γὰρ ἡμῶ-
θεν διὰ τὸ εἰκότως, οὕτω τὰ πρῶτα ὀνόματα ἰκνουμένα καὶ ἐν αὐτοῖς ἱερῶν
ἐπὶ τῶν κατὰ ἱκανοὺς ποιεῖται. Ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς τραγῳδίας τὸ γινώσκον ὀνόματα
ἀντιχρῶται αἰτίαι δὲ ὅτι πιπτεῖν ὅτι τὸ δυνάτον τὰ μὲν ἐν γινώσκον αὐ-
πιστευόμεν εἶναι δυνάτα· τὰ δὲ γινώσκον παρὰ ὅτι δυνάτα· ἢ γὰρ αὐτοὶ ἱστοί
εἰ ἢ ἀδύνατα· ἢ μὲν ἀδύνατα καὶ ἐν ταῖς τραγῳδίας ἵκναι, ἢ μὲν ἢ δυνάτα
γινώσκον ὅτι ὀνόματα, τὰ δὲ ἀδύνατα πιπτεῖν ἐν ἱστοίς ὅτι ὅτι δυνάτα ἢ τὸ
ἀγαθόν· ἄλλοι δὲ οὕτως γὰρ ἐν τοῖς ταῖς τραγῳδίας καὶ τὰ ὀνόματα ἰ-
κνύονται, καὶ ὅτι ἂν ἱστοί. Πο. c. 9.

" Actors what Names he pleases: And he does not as the *Satyrists*,
 " who speak only of *particular* Things. But in *Tragedy* they
 " make use of Names ready made to their hands. This makes us
 " more readily believe the thing to be *possible*; for Things that
 " have never yet been done, we are not obliged to think *possible*:
 " But what has been already done, is without all Dispute *possible*;
 " since it would never have been done, had it been impossible. Yet
 " in some *Tragedies*, there is but one or two known Names, and
 " all the rest feigned. Nay, in some others there is not one
 " known Name, as in the *Tragedy of Agathon*, call'd *The*
 " *FLOWER*, where all the Names, as well as Things, are
 " feigned and invented. And yet it came off with Applause.

In favour of our Subject 'tis, that we cite what *Aristotle* says in
 this passage, concerning the *Tragick Fable*. Nor is this a wresting
 of the Text, since this great Master lays it
 down as his first * Precept in the *Epopéa*.
That we ought to prepare the Fable thereof
as for Tragedy.

• Δεῖ τοὺς μύθους καθάπτειν
 ἐν ταῖς τετραμετέροις συνι-
 στάσι. P. c. 32.

'Tis to be observ'd, that to make the thing *probable*, and to per-
 swade Men of its *Possibility*, from its having been done already,
Aristotle orders us to put the Fable not under a *known Action*, but
 only under *known Names*. This makes good
 what we before alledged, viz. † *That the*
Poet should think of making his Action pro-
bable, when he gives Names to the Actors.
 This is the practice of those who make *Histo-*
ries of their own Inventions. The better to perswade the World of
 the Truth of what they say, they name the *Places* and the *Persons*;
 and the more these Names are known, the more Credit they meet
 with. *Homer* has acquitted himself so very
 handsomely in this Matter, that the Art he
 had of *feigning* the best of any Man in the
 World, is one of the Commendations he de-
 served from the mouth of * *Aristotle* himself.

† Κατὰ τὸ εἶδος ἢ τὸ
 ἀναγκάειν ἢ συζῆσαι
 ἢ πείναις ὀνόματα ἐπιτι-
 θεμένα. P. c. 9.

• Διδόντα ὃ μάλιστα
 Ὀμηρος τὸν τοῦ ἄλλου ψευ-
 δὴ λέγειν ὡς δεῖ. Poet.
 c. 24.

We conclude then that *Homer* in his *Practice*; and *Aristotle* in
 his *Precepts*, are exactly of the same mind; that *Homer* had no
 other Design but to form the Manners of his Country-men, by pro-
 posing to them, as *Horace* says, what was profitable or unprofita-
 ble, what was honourable or dishonourable: But that he did not
 undertake to rehearse any particular Action of *Achilles* or *Ulysses*.
 He made his *Fable*, and laid the Design of his Poems, without so
 much as thinking on these Princes; and afterwards, he did them
 the Honour to bestow their Names on the *Heroes* he had feign'd.

In other *Histories* of the *Trojan War* we do not indeed read of
 this Quarrel between *Achilles* and *Agamemnon*, which *Homer* has
 taken for the Subject-Matter of his *Iliad*: And what is no less con-

siderable,

siderable is, that this very Design and Action which the Poet has form'd under the name of *Achilles* at the *Siege of Troy*, might with the same *Probability* have went under the Name of *Tydeus*, *Capaneus*, or any other at the *Siege of Thebes*. One might have made *Adrastus* the General, and given him some occasion of exasperating the cholerick Nature of *Capaneus*. He, by withdrawing into his Tent only for a few days, might have given the *Thebans* some Advantages over his Party. Afterwards one might have made this furious Person return to his Duty: and then fighting with the rest, he might have gain'd the Victory to his own side, and reveng'd in one single day, the Affront and Loss they had suffer'd the three or four days before: And this is all we contend for in the *Iliad*.

The same might be said of *Ulysses*. All the Adventures we read of him in the *Odyssæis*, might with altogether as much *Probability* have been rehears'd under the Name of any other Prince returning from an Expedition. For the better Proof of which, we need only cast an eye upon the *Platform* which *Aristotle* himself has left us thereof: and 'tis as follows.

* Ἀποδυμῆς πρὸς ἐν
πολλὰ, καὶ παρορμητικῶς
ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν ἰσχυρὸν, καὶ
μόνα δὲ ἐπὶ τῷ οἴ-
κῳ ὅπως ἐχρῆται ὥστε τὰ
χρήματα ὑπὸ μηχανῆς
ἀναλίσκασθαι καὶ τὸν υἱὸν
ἐκείνου ἀντὶς ἀφικνῆναι
χρῆματι καὶ ἀναγνωρίσας
πάντας ἀλλοις ἐπιβλέψας,
ἑαυτὸν μὲν ἐπαύει, τὸ δὲ
ἐχθρὸς δίδωκεν. Τὸ μὲν
ἐν ἰδίῳ οἴκῳ, τὰ δὲ ἄλλα
ἐπιστήσια. *Aristot. Poet.*
c. 17.

* "A Man is absent from his own home
for several Years. *Neptune* persecutes him,
destroys all his Retinue, and only he
himself escapes. In the mean time his
Family is in disorder, his Estate is made
away with by his Wives Suitors, and his
Son is plotted against. But at last, after
many Storms at Sea, he returns home,
discovers himself to his Friends, conceals
himself from others, sets all things to
rights again, and puts his Enemies to
death. This (concludes *Aristotle*) is all
that is proper, the *Episodes* make up the
rest." This, in my mind, gives us abso-

lutely such an Idea of a *Fable* as I propos'd: And in this Model *Ulysses* seems to have as little to do as any other.

But after the Model is pitch'd upon, the *Action* invented, and the Names given, then if those whose Names are borrow'd have done any known Actions, the Poet ought to make use of them, and to accommodate these true Circumstances to his own Design. With these he must fill his *Episodes*, and from these he should draw all the Advantages possible, according to the Rules of Art. Thus *Aristotle* gives no Orders for making the *Episodes* till the Names are pitch'd upon.

He therefore transgresses the *Precepts* of *Aristotle*, and the *Practice* of *Homer*, and spoils the Essence of the *Epick Fable* in particular, as well as of other *Fables* in general, who begins by
looking

looking for his *Hero* in some History or other, and undertakes to rehearse a particular Action this *Hero* has done, as we see in *Silius Italicus*, *Lucan*, *Statius*, and in the Authors of the Adventures of *Hercules* and *Theseus*, which *Aristotle* takes notice of. They did not make any general or universal Platform without Names, but made it altogether singular. For how could any one write like *Silius*, without thinking on the particular Action and Name of *Hannibal*? Call him as much as you will, in your Platform, a *Certain Man*, yet still this *Certain Man* is determinately *Hannibal*. You are so far from taking away his Name, that after you have once nam'd him, you afterwards use a Pronoun or some other Word which signifies him, instead of the Term *Hannibal*, which you are loth to repeat. Thus *Aristotle* does not order the Names to be taken away (which can never be done) but he only orders to feign an Action without Names, to make it at first universal, as he instances in the *Odysseis* and *Iphigenia*.

C H A P. XIV.

Of the Real Actions, the Recitals whereof are Fables.

There is a great deal of Difference between *Fiction* and a downright *Lye*; and between a Thing's being *Probable*, and its being no more than *Probable*. The Poet is order'd to feign, but no body desires him to tell *Lyes*. He is told, that he is oblig'd to *Probability*, and not to *Truth*; but no one says, that the *Probability* he is oblig'd to by his Art is incompatible with the *Truth*. The *Truth* of an Action does not give him the Name of Poet, nor does it rob him of it: and, as *Aristotle* says, † an Author is as much a Poet, though the *Incidents* he relates did really happen: Because whatsoever has been done, is capable of all the *Probability*, and all the *Possibility*, which the Art requires, and of being such as ought to be feign'd.

This makes so little an Alteration in the Nature of Things, that even the Author of a *Fable* is not always satisfied with making a bare Narration of the Action he feigns, but sometimes sets it off with all the *Truth* 'tis capable of. Anciently this was very com-

† Καὶ ὁ ποιητὴς οὐ μόνον τὰ
ἰστοῦντα ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ οὐκ ἰστοῦντα
ποιεῖν δύναται. Τὸν γὰρ ποιη-
τὴν οὐκ ἐστὶν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀληθοῦς
καὶ τοῦ φανταστικοῦ ὁ ἀριθμὸς
ἀλλὰ τὸ εὖ καὶ καλῶς εἰπεῖν
καὶ οὕτως ἀποφασίζει τὸν ποιη-
τὴν ὅτιν. *Arist. Poet. c. 9.*

Omnia in figura contingebant iis. Paul. Epist. ad Corinth.

mon; and I might produce the whole *History* of the *Old & Testament*, all the *Historical Truths* whereof were so many *Fables*, or *Parables* divinely invented, which represent Allegorically to us the Doctrine and the Truths which the Author of them has since discover'd to us.

But without concerning our selves with *Sacred Things*, we know what a Father did to perswade his Children to Unity. He might have only told them, that a Man very eager of breaking all the Arrows in his Quiver, striv'd to snap them all in pieces at once; but after many fruitless Tryals, he was forc'd to part them, and then breaks them one after another without the least trouble. He might have related a thing that was false, and only probable. But he did something more: he put a bundle of Rods, tied close together, into the hands of each of his Children, and bid them see if they could break them: They used their utmost Endeavour, but to little purpose. Then he gave them the Rods one by one, and the weakest of these young Creatures broke them easily. The *Truth* of this Matter of Fact does not at all destroy the *Nature* of the *Fable*.

Sertorius made use of the same Artifice to his Soldiers. He order'd the Tails of a couple of Horses to be pull'd off before them. At last came a weak old Fellow, and did it with ease, pulling off the Hairs one after another; whilst a lusty Fellow had harra's'd himself to no purpose, because he took up too many Hairs at a time. When a *Recital* is made of this *true Action*, one tells as exact a *Fable*, as when one mentions the *Fable* of the *Iliad*, that of *Æsop's Dogs*, or any other of that Author, wherein is neither *Truth* nor *Probability*.

'Tis true this *Action* of Sertorius was feign'd before it was true, and this General did begin to form his *Fable* by the Moral, which is, (as I said) the common way of forming *Fables*. But here I add, that the *True Action* may precede the *Fable*. The Example of *Engravers* and *Statuaries* will make us easily conceive how this revers'd Order, so contrary to the Rules of Art, may notwithstanding be applied thereto without destroying them.

Art teaches the *Engraver* to form his Design first, to fantasie the Postures, and the Proportions he would give his Personages; and afterwards to look out for Materials that are proper to receive that which he has imagin'd. If notwithstanding he lights upon some choice Material, such as *Agar*, for instance, whose Figure, Colours, and Veins, cannot be suited to all that he has a mind it should; he then regulates his Design and Fancy according to his Matter. But yet he is not of the Opinion, that these lucky Hits and particular Accidents condemn the Justness of his Art, or make this a standing Rule for him to go by, viz. *That he must begin to look*

look out for Materials, and then form his Design according to what the Disposition of his Materials may suggest to his Fancy.

In this then, as in a great many other things, * Poetry is like Painting. The Poet * Ut Pictura Poësis erit. is frequently oblig'd to suit himself to the *Hor. Poet.* Dispositions of his Matter: which is found to be true, especially in the Composition of the *Episodes*, which are made after the General Personages are singulariz'd by the Imposition of the Names. It may likewise so happen, that some Person in History may furnish an Author with fine Fancies, and as exact a Moral as that which *Homer* teaches. And in this Case, the Poet does not at all transgress his Art, though he should apply all his Moral to the Action. But notwithstanding this rare and lucky Hit, the common Rules lose nothing of their Exactness or Authority.

We still maintain, " That the *Epick Poem* is a *Fable*; that is, " not the *Rehearsal* of the *Action* of some one *Hero*, in order " to form Mens Manners by his Example; but, on the contrary, " a Discourse invented to form the Manners by the *Recital* of " a feign'd *Action*, and describ'd at pleasure under the borrow'd " Name of some Illustrious Person or other, that is made choice " of, after the *Platform* of the *Action*, that is ascrib'd to him, " is laid.

CHAP. XV.

Of the feign'd Actions, the Recitals whereof are Historical.

AS there are *True Actions*, the *Recitals* whereof are exact and regular *Fables*; so on the other hand, there are *Feign'd Actions*, the *Recitals* whereof are *Historical*. Nothing is to be esteem'd *Fabulous* in them, but a downright *Falshood*, and that has as little to do with the *Fable*, as the *Truth* of *History*. The Reason of this is, that the most essential part of the *Fable*, and that which must indispensibly serve for its Foundation, is the *Truth* signified. 'Tis easie to explain our selves by those very Examples we have already made use of; we need only cut off some necessary Circumstances of them in order to illustrate the Doctrine we would add here.

If the *Dogs* that were set to keep the *Sheep*, and whose Falling out gave the *Wolf* an opportunity of seizing upon some of them; if they, I say, follow the *Wolf* before they end their Quarrel; and if up-
on

on overtaking him, they are as fierce against one another, as against their Common Enemy: in this case, though the Wolf quit his Prey, fly for it, or though he die of the Wounds they give him; yet this Fiction will no longer signify, That Concord re-establishes what Discord destroys; since the Calamity would have been ended, though the Discord still continued.

In like manner, if Achilles being provok'd at the Death of Patroclus, had set upon and kill'd Hector without being reconcil'd to Agamemnon; the Omission of this Incident, would have spoil'd the Fable.

We add farther, that if Achilles had been less inexorable, and had submitted to the Offers of Agamemnon before the Death of Patroclus; and if this Quarrel had not cost him the Life of his Friend, the Fable would have been spoil'd: For since the Quarrel would have been only prejudicial to Agamemnon, this Example would have shew'd us, in the Person of Achilles, that one might Quarrel, and be at Variance, without losing any thing: which is quite contrary to the Moral of the Poet.

We should deprive the Odyssæis of its very Soul, and spoil its Fable; should we retrench from it the Disorders which the Suitors of Penelope rais'd in the Isle of Ithaca, during the Absence of Ulysses: because this Poem would no longer inform us of the mischievous Effects which the Absence of a Commander, a King, or a Father of a Family, does produce.

Lastly, Take away from the Æneid, the Choice which the Gods made of Æneas for the re-establishing of the Empire; his Divine Arms; the Care Jupiter took to engage Mezentius in the Quarrel, where he was to be punish'd for his Impieties; and the Terrors with which this God affrights Turnus: and the Æneid will no longer inform the Romans in favour of Augustus, That the Founders of Empires, such as this Prince was, were the Chosen of Heaven, that Divine Providence protects them from all manner of Violence, and severely punishes the Impious, who oppose their Designs.

All these Recitals want their Emphasis, and that Instruction, which is the most essential part of the Fable. When a Poet goes this way to work, he does not make such Epick Poems as Aristotle and Horace prescribes Rules for, nor such as Homer and Virgil has left us such exact Patterns of. It is not much matter whether these Recitals are of true Things, such as those of Lucan, and Silius Italicus; or whether they are feign'd and drawn from Fables, such as those of Statius in his two Poems. He relates a Fiction, they History: but all three write more like Historians than Epick Poets.

'Tis true, they have all a Mixture of Divinities and Machines, which carry a Fabulous and Poetical Air in them: but since these

very

very Additions are likewise in true *Fables*, they will never make these *Recitals* to be of the Nature of an *Epopée*; because these *Fables* consist only in the Additions and Decorations of the Action. Now the *Epick Fable* is none of all this; 'tis on the contrary the Soul of a Poem, and the *Ground-work* upon which all the rest is built. And this *Ground-work* is to be prepar'd before one so much as think of the Decorations, which make no part of the Essence of the *Fable*. The being adorn'd and loaded with Animate Things, will never make an Animal, but there must be a Soul added to it: And though all the Earth were cover'd and embellish'd with an infinite number of Trees, and pierc'd very deep with their Roots, yet it will never pass for a Tree it self.

CHAP. XVI.

Of the Vicious Multiplication of Fables.

Aristotle bestows large Commendations on *Homer* for the Simplicity of his Design, because he has included in one single part all that happen'd in the *Trojan War*. And to him he opposes the Ignorance of certain Poets, who imagin'd that the Unity of the *Fable*, or of the *Action*, was well enough preserv'd by the Unity of the *Hero*, and who compos'd their *Theseid's*, *Heraclid's*, and such like Poems, in each of which they heap'd up every thing that happen'd to their principal Personage. The Instances of these Defects which *Aristotle* blames, and would have us avoid, are very instructive. These Poems are lost to us: but *Statius* has something very like it.

His *Achilleid* is a Model of all the Adventures which the Poets have feign'd under the Name of *Achilles* *.

" O Goddess (says this Poet) sing of the
" magnanimous Son of *Aeacus*, that has
" made *Jove* himself tremble, and was deny'd
" Admittance into Heaven, from
" whence he deduc'd his Origin. *Homer*
" has render'd his Actions very famous;
" but he has omitted a great many more
" than he has mention'd: For my part, I
" will not omit any thing. 'Tis this *Hero*
" at his full Length which I describe. Here is a noble Design, and
Aristotle falls short of what he proposes.

All this cannot be consider'd, but as an *Historical Recital*, and without the least Glimpse of a *Fable*. Nor can I represent the
Idea

* *Magnanimum Aecidem, formidatamque Tonanti Progeniem, & patrio vetricam succedere caelo, Diva refer. Quamquam acta Viri multum incluta cantu Maenorio, sed plura vacant. Nos ire per omnem, sic amor est, Heroes vetis.*

Idea I have of this Design better, than by comparing it with the *Fables of Æsop*. I have already compar'd the *Iliad* with one of these *Fables*: and sure I may take the same liberty in a Poem that is less Regular; and make a Comparison between the *Achilleid* which comprehends several Actions under one and the same Name, and several *Fables* which likewise go under one Name. *Homer* and *Virgil* diverted themselves with their Poems of the *Gnat*, and of the *Battel between the Frogs and the Mice*: nor shall I stoop lower, when, upon the like occasion, I shall enlarge myself as far as the Design of *Statius*, and the Necessity of this Doctrine require me.

Let us suppose then an Author, who is as well vers'd in the *Fables of Æsop*, as *Statius* was in the *Epick Fable*; and who has read the *Batrachomyomachia*, as well as *Statius* has the *Iliad*. He shall have discover'd in this *Battel between the Mice and the Frogs*, the great Commendations which *Homer* bestows on the Valour of one of the *Heroes* in this *Fable*, upon *Meridarpax* for instance; whose Bravery made *Jove* and all the Gods wonder no less, than that of *Capaneus* in the *Thebaid*. And as *Statius* has read of several Actions of *Achilles*, which are not in the *Iliad*; this Author likewise shall have read of many Adventures attributed to the *Mouse*, which are not in the *Batrachomyomachia* of *Homer*.

He shall know what passed between the *City-Mouse* and the *Country-Mouse*; in order to teach us, That a little Estate enjoy'd quietly is better than a copious one, that exposes us to continual fears.

He shall know that a *Lion* having spared the Life of a *Mouse*, was afterwards saved by this very *Mouse*, who gnaw'd assunder the Toils in which he was caught; whereby he might inform us, That the good Offices we do to the most Infirm and Ignoble, are not always lost.

He shall know the Story of the *Mountains*, which after great Groans, and much ado, were deliver'd of a *Mouse*; like those who promise much, but perform little.

He shall have read in the *Battel between the Cats and the Mice*, that the *Mice* being defeated and put to flight, those amongst 'em, who had put Horns upon their Heads as a distinguishing Note of their being the *Commanders*, could not get into their Holes again, and so were all cut off: Because in the like Disorders, the Chief Leaders, and Men of Note, do commonly pay Sawce for all.

And upon these Discoveries, when he has conceiv'd the Idea of a Piece more surprizing than the *Batrachomyomachia*, or than any other particular *Fable of Æsop*, he shall undertake a Poem of all the *Fables of the Mouse*: as *Statius* undertook one about every thing

thing that Story or the Poets ever said of *Achilles*. He might begin after the same manner, as *Statius* did his *Achilleid*:

"Inspire me, O my Muse, what I ought to say concerning the
"Magnanimous *Meridarpax*, which *Jove* himself cannot look
"upon without trembling. *Homer* indeed has celebrated some
"of his Actions in his Poem; but there are a great many still
"untouch'd; and I am resolv'd to omit nothing that my *Hero*
"has done.

He, as well as *Achilles*, had a *Mortal* for his Sire, to wit, the Redoubted *Artepibulus*, and a Mother far above his Rank and Quality, no less than a lofty *Mountain*. His Birth is foretold by the Oracles, and the People flocking together from all parts to be Witnesses of this miraculous Labour, beheld *Meridarpax* creep out of his Mothers Belly, with so much Surprize and Delight, that their joyful Shouts and loud Laughter carried the News thereof to the Gods.

In the War his Associates maintain'd against the *Amazonians* of the *Lakes*, he signaliz'd himself in the Death of *Physignathus*. He would have utterly destroy'd all his Enemies, had not the Gods put a stop to his Designs.

To refresh himself after the Fatigues of this War, he was for taking the Air in some Country-Seat or other. But by the way he is surprized by a furious *Lion*, who is just ready to tear him to pieces: but *Meridarpax* was no less eloquent than stout. The *Lion* admir'd his parts, and let him go.

He was welcom'd in the Country by an old Friend of his Sire's. This *Villager* thought of making him a delicate Repast with his Country-Fare: but these old, dry, and unfavoury Morsels would not down with our nice Stranger. Whereupon bepitying the sorry Life of his Friend, he invites him to a more pleasant one, and prevail'd upon him to jog along with him.

They were scarce got half-way to their Journey's end, but they heard a most terrible noise. *Meridarpax* perceiv'd 'twas the *Lion's* Roar which before had spar'd his Life. He made that way, and in short found him so fetter'd in the Noose, that he expected nothing else but Death: the *Mouse* freed him from that fear, by gnawing asunder several Knots; and put the Prisoner in a Capacity of freeing himself from the rest.

Meridarpax re-joins his Country-Friend, conducts him to Town, and receives him very splendidly in a Pantry well furnish'd. This new *Citizen* was blessing himself at his happy Change; when on the sudden in steps the Housekeeper, and at her Heels one of the most formidable Enemies these two Guests had. The *Domestick* betook himself presently to his Citadel: but the poor *Stranger*, seiz'd with Fear, and every Limb about him in an Ague, sees himself a long time expos'd to the Claws of a merciless Enemy. In short

short he escap'd; and without minding the good Cheer, as soon as the Danger was over, and he came to himself, he takes his Congé of his Host, and tells him, *That he preferr'd his quiet Poverty to all that Plenty which was so attended with frights and fears.*

Meridarpax stomachs this Affront, calls together a great many of his Allies, and prevails so effectually upon them, that they enter into a Confederacy with him, and offer to serve him in the War. He, the better to maintain his Grandeur, and make himself more conspicuous than all the rest, claps two great Horns on his Forehead. At the first opening of the Pantry he had a great deal of Success against some of the young Rangers, who first came in. But no sooner had their squeaking call'd in their Sires and their Dams, and the Wawling of a great many others at a distance, gave notice of a new Reinforcement, that was ready to pour in upon the Assailants, but they presently thought of a speedy Retreat. The rest with ease slunk into their Holes, and none left upon the spot but *Meridarpax* embarrass'd with the Ensigns of his Grandeur, which made the Avenues too strait for him to escape at. One of his Party bid him lay aside his Regalities, but he had scarce time to reply, *That he had rather die like a King, and make his Exit gloriously.*

A Poem made up of these Stories joyn'd together, and which we might compare with one of the *Fables of Æsop* or the *Batrachomyomachia*, is very much like the Idea I have of the *Theſeid*, the *Heracloid*, the *Achilleid*, and other such like Poems, when compar'd with those of *Virgil* and *Homer*.

Aristotle was in the right, when he call'd a certain little *Iliad* the whole *Trojan War* squeez'd into the compass of one single Poem. This *Iliad* indeed was very small, since it was all contain'd in a very narrow Compass. It was not at all like the *Iliad* of *Homer*, a small part of which fill'd so many Books. We may say as much of the *Achilles* of *Statius*, who is comprehended at his full Length within the Compass of twelve Books. And the *Achilles* of *Homer* is so vast, that a few days of his Anger and Passion have taken up four and twenty Books compleatly.

According to the old * *Adage* it must needs follow, that this *Lion* of *Homer* was of a prodigious size, since so large a Table could contain no more than one single Paw, which had been the Destruction of so many *Heroes*. And on the other side, that the *Lion* of *Statius* was but of a very small size, since all his Parts could be comprehended and included in a Table less by half than that of *Homer's*.

You see then the ill Effects of *Polymythia*, or a *Vicious Multiplication of Fables*. The *Fable* of the *Dogs* and the *Wolf* demonstrates

states how beautiful and regular the *Iliad* is; and the Narratives of the Adventures of the *Mouse* shews the contrary in the *Achilleid*. If my two Parallels are of equal justness, the Difference that appears to be between the *Achilles* of *Homer* and that of *Statius* ought to be attributed to nothing else but the different Conduct of these two Authors.

There is still another way of irregularly multiplying Fables, without making a Rehearsal of the Hero's whole Life: and that is, by mixing with the *main Action* other *foreign Actions*, which have no manner of Relation thereto. This belongs to the *Unity of the Action*, and the Art of making the *Episodes*; of which we shall speak in the next Book.

The *Poem of Ovid's Metamorphoses* is of another kind. If (as I have already laid down the Idea I conceiv'd of the *Modell* of *Statius*, of the *Heraclid*, of the *Theſeid*, and of other ſuch like Pieces of the Ancient Poets) I had a mind likewiſe to preſent the World with an Example of *Æſop's Fables* compar'd with *Ovid's Metamorphoses*; I ſhould be forced to put all the *Fables* of *Æſop* into one Body: Becauſe *Ovid* is not contented to rehearſe all that ever happen'd either to *Achilles*, or to *Hercules*, or to *Theſeus*, or to any other ſingle Perſonage; but he makes a *Recital* of all that ever happen'd to all the Perſons of the *Poetical Fables*. This *Recital* is by no means an *Epick Poem*, but a *Collection* of all the *Fables* that were ever writ in *Verſe*, with as much *Connexion* and *Union*, as the *Compiler* of ſo many *Incidents* could deviſe.

And yet I do not see how any one can condemn this Design, and tax its Author with Ignorance: provided none pretend that he design'd to make an *Eppœa*, nor compare it to the Poems of *Homer* and *Virgil*, as *Stratus* has done his *Achilleid* and *Thebaid*.

CHAPTER XVII.

Of the Regular Multiplication of Fables.

Altho' we have been speaking so much against the *Multiplication of Fables*, yet one cannot absolutely condemn it. Our Poets have got several *Fables* in each of their Poems, and *Horace* commends *Homer* for it. Nay *Aristotle* himself forbids it in such a slight way, as might be easily evaded. * He finds fault with those Poets who were for reducing the *Unity* of the *Fable* into the *Unity* of the

Hero ;

Hero; because One Man may have perform'd several Adventures, which 'tis impossible to reduce under any One and simple head. This reducing of all things to *Unity* and *Simplicity* is what † *Horace* likewise makes his first Rule.

† Denique sit quodvis simplex duntaxat, & unum.
Hor. Poet.

According to these Rules then, it will be allowable to make use of several *Fables*; or (to speak more correctly) of several Incidents which may be divided into several *Fables*; provided they are so order'd, that the *Unity* of the *Fable* be not spoil'd thereby. This Liberty is still greater in the *Epick Poem*, because 'tis of a larger Extent than ordinary Poems, and ought to be *Entire* and *Complete*.

I will explain my self more distinctly by the practice of our Poets.

No doubt but one might make four distinct *Fables* out of these four following Instructions.

1. *Division between those of the same party exposes them to the fury of their Enemies.*

2. *Conceal your weakness, and you will be dreaded as much, as if you had none of these Imperfections, which they know nothing of.*

3. *When your strength is only feign'd, and founded only in the Opinion of others; never venture so far, as if your strength was real.*

4. *The more you agree together, the less hurt will your Enemies do you.*

'Tis plain, I say, that each of these particular *Maxims*, might serve for the *Ground-work* of a *Fiction*, and one might make four distinct *Fables* out of them. May not a Man therefore put all these into one single *Epopée*? No: Our Masters forbid that, unless he could make one single *Fable* out of them all.

But they do not at all forbid it, if the Poet has so much skill as to unite all into one Body, as Members and Parts, each of which taken asunder would be imperfect; and if he joins them so, as that this *Conjunction* shall be no hinderance at all to the *Unity* and the *Regular simplicity* of the *Fable*. This is what *Homer* has done with such success in the *Composition* of the *Iliad*.

1. *The Division between Achilles and his Allies tended to the ruin of their Designs.* 2. *Patroclus comes to their Relief in the Armour of this Hero, and Hector retreats.* 3. *But this young man pushing the Advantage, which his Disguise gave him, too far, ventures to engage with Hector himself; but not being Master of Achilles's strength (whom he only represented in outward appearance) he is killed, and by this means leaves the Grecian Affairs in the same disorder, which he in that Disguise came to free them from.* 4. *Achilles provoked at the Death of his friend, is reconciled, and revenges his loss by the Death of Hector.* These various Incidents

dents being thus *United* together, do not make different *Actions* and *Fables*, but are only the uncompleat, and unfinished *Parts* of one and the same *Action* and *Fable*, which alone can only be said to be *Compleat* and *Entire*: And all these *Maxims* of the *Moral*, are easily reduc'd into these two parts, which in my opinion cannot be separated without enervating the force of both. The two parts are these, * *That a right understanding is the Preservation, and Discord the Destruction of States.*

* Concordia res parvas
crescunt: discordia magnas
dilabuntur. Salsst. de Bell.
Jug.

Tho' then our Poets have made use of two parts in their Poems, each of which might have serv'd for a *Fable*, as we have observ'd: Yet this *Multiplication* cannot be call'd a *vicious* and *irregular Polymythia*, contrary to the necessary *Unity* and *Simplicity* of the *Fable*; but it gives the *Fable* another *Qualification*, altogether as necessary and as regular, namely its *Perfection* and *finishing stroke*.

There are *Fables* which naturally contain in them a great many parts, each of which might make an exact *Fable*: And there are likewise *Actions* of the very same nature. The subject Matter of the *Odyssæis* is of this kind; for *Homer* being willing to instruct a Prince and his Subjects, could not do it without *Multiplying Instructions*; and this Prince's Travels into Countries quite different from each other are likewise different *Actions*.

This *Multiplication of Instructions* and *Incidents* is extremely approv'd of by *Horace*. He commends the † *Adventures of Antiphates, Polypheme, Charybdis, Circe, the Sirens* and others, styling them the *Miracles of the Odyssæis*.

† Ut speciosa dehinc miracula promat, Antiphaten, Scyllamque, & cum Cyclope Charybdim. Hor. Pœt.

One might likewise multiply the *Fable* another way, by mixing with it some other *Fable* which should not be a part of the Principal one, but only a *Species* of it. This might be done by applying to some Point that is chiefly specified the *Moral Instruction*, which the *Action* contains in general. *Homer* has left us an Example of this in the *Fable of Vulcan*, at the End of his first Book of the *Iliad*.

The *General Instruction* is, *That Discord is a prejudice of the Affairs of them who quarrel*: And this story of *Vulcan* applies it, to the Injury which the falling out of Parents do their Children.

" *Jupiter* and *Juno* quarrel, their Son *Vulcan* is for perswading
" his Mother to submit to her Lord and Husband, because he was
" most Powerful. You know (says he) what befell me for
" endeavouring once to protect you from the rage of *Jupiter*. He
" took me by the Heels, and threw me headlong from his Battle-
" ments, and I carry the marks of it still about me.

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This *Fable* is quite distinct from the *Body* of the *main Action*; for the *Quarrel* between *Jupiter* and *Juno*, which cost *Vulcan* so dear, had nothing to do with the *Grecian Affairs*: 'Tis likewise compris'd in five Lines,

C H A P. XVIII.

The Conclusion of the First Book.

THE *Unity* of the *Fable*, and the *Regular* or *Vicious Multiplication* that may be made thereof, depends in a great measure upon the *Unity of the Action*, and upon the *Episodes*; so we shall speak more thereof in another place: But in this and many other Points, the *Examen* of our Authors, and those particular Instructions one might descend to for an exact Understanding of this Doctrine, would never be at end. And tho I should fill several Volumes with what I have to say about it, yet I should still leave enough to employ the *Imagination*, the *Genius*, and the *Judgment* of both *Criticks* and *Poets*, which *Art* without *Nature* never brings to Perfection. Nor are we to fancy that *Nature* alone, and the Advantages of a happy *Genius*, can make us capable of passing a Judgment upon the Ancient Poets; unless *Art* and *Study* acquaint us with the *Tast* and the *Manners* of their Auditors, and of the times they liv'd in.

The Relish which all Antiquity, both *Sacred* and *Profane*, *Greek* and *Barbarian*, had for *Fables*, *Parables*, and *Allegories* (which are one and the same in this place) gave the Ancient Poets a great

* Vobis datum est nosse
mysteria, cæteris in Para-
bolicis tantum. Qui potest
capere capiat.

Sapientiam omnium an-
tiquorum exquireret sapiens,
& in versutias Parabolarum
simul introibit, occulta pro-
verbiorum exquireret, & in
absconditis Parabolarum
conversabitur. Eccl. i. c.
39.

deal more Liberty than the Moderns have; and make things in *Homer* pass for Beauties, which would look but ill in a Piece of Modern Poetry. This likewise exposes our Ancient Poet to such Censures, as bewray our Ignorance oftner than his faults. The Custom of that time was to conceal their Mysteries from Vulgar View, and not to explain their Allegories. Men of Learning made it a particular Study to discover these mysterious Meanings, and this Penetration of

thought made a Considerable part of their Learning. Our Age, which in other things pretends to so much Light and Curiosity, is very negligent of these sorts of Knowledge, since they no longer
:gree with our Customs.

It is perhaps this very Neglect, which conceals from our Eyes the greatest Beauties of *Homer*, and which instead of his Skill, only shews us a very mean and gross Outside, which hinders us from judging favourably of his Spirit and Conduct. However he had reason to make use of this way, and to accommodate himself to the * Mode of his Age.

He knew well enough, that those, who did not penetrate him would admire him as much as others; because every one was persuaded that what appear'd to the Eye of the World, was in effect nothing else but the Shell, which contained the Profitable and Pleasant parts of his Work.

Virgil was a great deal harder put to it, because the *Romans* of his time did not so frequently use *Fables* and *Allegories*. *Cicero* did not treat of *Philosophy* as *Plato* and *Socrates* did, upon whom they Father *Æsop's Fables*. And S. * *Jerom*

takes notice that *Parables* were in greatest vogue in the *East*. So that when *Virgil* was minded to shroud his Instruction and Doctrine under *Allegories*, he could not be contented with such a plain outside as *Homer's*

was, which gravels those who cannot penetrate it, and who are ignorant that he speaks figuratively. But he has so composed his *Outside*, and his *Fictions*, that those very persons who can go no farther, may, without seeking for any thing else, be very well satisfied with what they find there.

This Method is wholly conformable to our Way, and very much to our Palates. But I fancy, the satisfaction we so easily find in these *External Fictions* alone, does us some Prejudice. The more we fix there, the less search do we make into the Bottom and Truth of things. This makes us perhaps Equivocate upon the Word *Fable*, which we apply so differently to the *Epopea*, and to the *Fictions* of *Æsop*.

This Prepossession of Mind does *Homer* a great deal of Diskindness; for we are often willing to find such Vertues and good Manners there, which are not there, and which we suppose ought regularly to have been there: Because we are so little acquainted with his way of teaching *Morality*.

From hence it comes to pass that we meet with so great Obscurities in the Precepts of *Aristotle* and *Horace*, who commend *Homer* so much for that, which we are so little acquainted with, especially if we examine it according to the Ideas of Perfection, which we generally form to our Selves. By this means we shall be subject to great Confusions and many Contradictions. Before ever then we pass a judgment upon these things, and upon *Homer*, who is the

* Poeta officium in eo positum ut quæ vera sunt in alias species obliquisfigurationibus cum decore aliquo conversa traducat. *Laënt. Insit. l. n.*

* Familiare est Syris & maxime Palæstinis ad omnem sermonem suum Parabolis jungere. *Hieros. in Matth.*

52 *Monfieur Boſſu's Treatiſe, &c. Chap. XVIII.*

Author and firſt Model of them, 'tis requiſite we rightly comprehend his *Allegories*, and penetrate into the *Moral* and *Physical Truths* of the *Fable*, with which his Poems are ſo full.

As little inſight as I have in theſe Matters; yet I fanſie, I have ſaid enough to explain what a *Fable* is, and to demonſtrate the Idea I have of the *Nature* of the *Epick Poem*.

The End of the firſt Book

Monſieur

Monfieur *Boffu*'s Treatife

OF THE

EPICK POEM.

BOOK II.

*Concerning the fubject Matter of the
Epick Poem, or concerning the
Action.*

CHAP. I.

What the fubject Matter of the Epick Poem is.

THE *Matter* of a Poem is the fubject which the Poet undertakes, propofes and works upon. So that the *Moral*, and the *Instructions* which are the *End* of the *Epopea*, are not the *Matter* of it. Thefe things are left by Poets in their Allegorical and Figurative Obscurity. They only give us notice in the Beginning of their Poems, that they fing fome Action or another: *The Revenge of Achilles, the Return of Ulyffes, and the Arrival of Æneas into Italy.* Our Mafters fay juft the fame thing. * *Aristotle* informs us that the Poet *Imitates an Action*: And † *Horace* in more exprefs terms tells us, *That the Actions are the fubject Matter of the Epopea.*

* *Mijunus megistos.* Poet. c. 6. and elfewhere.

† *Res gefte Regumque
Documque, & triftia bella,
Quo fcribi poffent numero
monftravit Homerus. Hor.
Poet.*

† Μιμήματα αὐτὴν μιμήματα
 ἀνέστησαν. Ar. Poet. c. 2.
 † Μῆτιν ἀείδει δία, Πη-
 λιάδην, Ἀχιλλέου Οὐλύ-
 μινον. Uliad. l.
 † Ἀχιλλεὺς μὲν ἔστιν ἄνθρωπος
 πολυτρόπον, &c. Odyss.
 l.
 a Arma! Virumque cano,
 Trojæ qui primus ab oris
 Italiam fato profugus La-
 vinaque venit Littora.
 Aeneid. l.

But this *Action* is the *Action* of some Person: And our Authors expressly say as much. * *Aristotle* says that the Poets, who imitate, Imitate the Persons that Act. *Horace* says, that the Imitated *Actions* are the *Actions* of Kings, and Generals of an Army. And our Poets do not propose simply, a *Revenge*, a *Return*, or an *Establishment*: But they say further, that 'tis † *Achilles*, who is Reveng'd; † *Ulysses*, who Returns; and † *Aeneas*, that goes to be Establish'd. There-
 fore, both the *Actions* and the *Personages*

are the *Subject Matter* of the *Epopea*.

But suppose we should consider them apart, and ask whether the *Action* or the *Persons*, is the Chief and Principal *Matter* of the Poem: It is plain by what has been said in the former Book, that the *Action* is not made for the *Hero*, since that ought to be feign'd and invent-
 ed independently from him, and before the Poet thought of using his Name; and that on the other hand, the *Hero* is only design'd for the *Action*: And that the Names of *Achilles*, *Ulysses*, and *Aeneas* are only borrow'd to represent the *Personages* which the Poet feign'd in general. The Nature of the *Fable* will not admit us to doubt hereof; since all the *Actions* that are there rehears'd under the Names of a *Dog*, a *Wolf*, a *Lion*, a *Man*, and the like, are not design'd to inform us of the Nature of these Animals to which they are applied; or to tell us of some Adventure that happen'd to them: For the Author of a *Fable* does not mind any such thing. These *Personages* on the contrary are only design'd to sustain the

* Ἐστὶν ἡ μίμησις ἱστορίας.
 ἢ διὰ τὸ μιμῆσαι τὰς
 ἱστορίας. Arist. Poet.
 c. 6.

Action he has invented. It is therefore true in this Sense, that the * *Action* alone is the *Subject Matter* of the *Epopea*, or at least, that 'tis a great deal more so than the *Persons*; since that in its own Nature is so, and the

Persons are only so by virtue of the *Action*.

So likewise have those been condemn'd, who have taken the *Heroes* for the *Subject Matter* of their Poems. *Aristotle* finds fault with the Poets who under the name of the *Theseid*, and the *Heraclid*, have writ the Lives of *Theseus* and *Hercules* in Verse. *Stratus* is likewise to blame in his *Achilleid*, because he does not sing of *Achilles* who did such or such an *Action*, as *Homer* and *Virgil* have done; but he sings *Achilles* himself, and this *Achilles* at his full length.

'Tis true *Virgil* in his *Aeneid*, and *Homer* in his *Odysses* call their Poem by their *Hero's* Name: But this is no more than what is ordinary in *Fables*. Thus the Titles run, the *Wolf* and the *Lamb*, the *Lion* and the *Moose*, &c. and yet no one imagines, that these *Fables* were written to inform us of the Nature of these Ani-
 mal,

mals, or to tell us what a certain *Wolf* has done or said. The same Judgment ought to be made of the *Epick Fables*, and the Application thereof is easie.

This Doctrine may easily render us capable of judging what extent is allowable to the *Matter* of a Poem; of what *Incidents* it is compos'd; and whether 'tis lawful to insert such as belong not to the main *Matter*.

Since then the *Action* is the *Matter* of a *Fable*, it is plain that whatever *Incidents* are necessary to the *Fable*, and make up a part of it, are likewise necessary to the *Action*, and are parts of the *Epick Matter*, none of which ought to be omitted: Such, for instance, are the Quarrel of the *Dogs*; and that of *Agamemnon* and *Achilles*: The havoc which the *Wolf* made among the *Sheep*; and the Slaughter which *Hector* made in the Confederate Army: The re-union of the *Dogs* with each other; and that of the *Grecian Princes*: And lastly, the Re-settlement and Victory which was consequent to this Re-union in each of these *Fables*. Thus all things being adjusted, you see the *Fable*, and the whole *Action*, with which the Poem ought to conclude. If less had been said about it, it had not been enough.

But can an Author put nothing into his Poem, but what is purely the *Matter* of it? Or has he not the Liberty of inserting what he pleases, and of tacking to it, as * *Horace*

expresses himself, some pieces of rich and gay Stuff, that have nothing to do with the Ground-work? This is another Vicious Ex-

* Purpureus Intè qui Splendat unus & alter Assuitur pannus. *Hor. Pers.*

trême, into which we shall never fall, if we follow the Dictates of Right Reason, the Practice of good Poets, and the Rules of the best Masters. They permit us on the one hand to insert some Incident or another, that is necessary to Clear up a part of the *Action* altho this Incident make up no part of the *Fable* nor the *Action*; and tho of it self it be not the Subject *Matter* of the *Epopée*: And on the other hand they do not approve of the Recital of an Incident that has not one of these two Conditions, viz. Such a one as is neither the *Matter* of the *Epopée*, nor necessary to illustrate any part of the *Action*.

Examples and Authority will justify this Doctrine, and make it more intelligible.

If in the *Fable* we mention'd, *Æsop* had related that the *Wolf* ranging one day in the Forest prick'd his Foot with a Thorn, of which after a great deal of Pain he was at last cur'd; doubtless he would have quite spoil'd his *Fable*: And *Homer* too had spoil'd his, if he had made an ample Narration of some Adventure that had happen'd to *Hector*, which had no manner of dependance on his design. They would have been more considerably to blame, had they inserted any Incident, which had not happen'd to these chief Personages, but which they only saw or heard. On the other side *Æsop*

had said something to the purpose, if, to amplify his Fable, he had related that the *Wolf* was wounded in the Foot, and being not quite cur'd, the Pain or the Weakness of that part hinder'd his Running, and expos'd him a Prey to the *Dogs*. So *Homer* has very regularly related, that *Ulysses* had formerly been wounded in the Leg, as he was hunting on the top of *Parnassus*: For this Wound serv'd to discover this *Hero*, and this discovery is part of the *Action*, and of the *Matter* of the Poem.

An *Historian*, that undertakes to write of one single Action, as the War of *Catiline*, or the Reign of a King, as *Salust* has done that of *Jugurtha*; has not for his *subject Matter* the Wars and Actions which went before, or happen'd after. Yet he may mention some, which may serve as Instances in the Deliberations; or for the maintaining of some Interests; or upon any other Occasion that is necessary to his main Subject. A *Poet* has the same Privileges, and the same Reasons on his side: Our two have practis'd accordingly, and have the Approbation of *Aristotle* himself. For he does not blame *Homer* for making the Recital we mention'd; and yet he says

* Οδυσσεύς γὰρ ὁ ποιῶν ἐκ
ἐποίησεν ἄπειρα ὅσα αὐτῷ
συνέβη· ὧν πληγῆται μὲν
ἐν τῷ Πάνασσῳ, μάλιστα δὲ
ἀποροποιήσασθαι ἐν τῷ
ἀγῶνι, ὃν ἰδὼν Διὶ
ἡρώεσσι ἀναγκάων ἢ ἡ
εἶχε Διὶ τὸν γένεσθαι.
Arist. Poet. c. 8.

that the Wound of *Ulysses* is not the *Matter* of the Poem to which it is apply'd. His words are these. * *When Homer compos'd his Odysses, he did not make all the Adventures of Ulysses the Matter of his Poem; such as the Wound he receiv'd upon Parnassus, and the folly he feign'd before the Grecians: Because, tho' one of these two things happen'd; yet it cannot be said that*

the other ought necessarily, or probably to have happen'd as the Consequence of the former.

This Passage of *Aristotle* teaches us two things. The first is, that every thing we meet with in an *Epick Poem* is not the *Matter* of it; since this Wound of *Ulysses*, which *Aristotle*, says is not the *Matter* of the *Odysses*, is notwithstanding very largely described there. The second is, that the foreign Incidents, that are inserted in the Poem, should be so United and Joyn'd to some other Incident, which is really the *subject Matter* of the Poem, that one might swear if one happen'd, the other must necessarily, or in all Probability have happen'd as a Consequence of the former.

The † *Poet* has observ'd this himself in the Wound of *Ulysses*. The discovery thereof is a Consequence so probable, that this *Hero* finding he was forc'd to let his Nurse wash his Feet, chose to let her do it in a dark place, that so at least she might be kept from the sight of it. The Birth and Education of *Camilla* is an Incident made use of after the very same way in the *Aeneid*:

† Πρὶν δὲ σκίτον ἐνθά-
πρ' ἵστα. Αὐτίκα γὰρ
χαράθυμον εἰσαίω μὲν
ἐλαβῆσα Οὐλὴν ἀμφοτέρω-
τα. Odyss. lib. 19.

It is not the *subject Matter* of the Poem, but 'tis necessary to clear up so surprizing a Miracle as was the Valour of that excellent *Virago*.

When an Adventure has not this Consequence, nor this necessary or Probable Connexion with some part or another of the *Matter* proper to the Poem; 'tis by no means to be inserted: And upon this account *Homer* has not said one word of the Counterfeit folly of *Ulysses*. *Statius* with a great deal more Reason should never have meddled with the story of *Hyppolyte*.

All the particular Incidents which compose the Action are called *Episodes*. We ought then to be well acquainted with the *Nature*, *Union*, and *Qualities* of them, if we would know what is the *Action* and the *Subject Matter* of the *Epic Poem*.

CHAP. II.

Episodes consider'd in their Original.

THE better to know what an *Episode* is, and to comprehend what *Aristotle* has said about it, we must look back for it in its first beginning, and in the Rise of *Tragedy*, whereby it first began. I speak of it here tho' *Monsieur Hedelin* has formerly writ about it.

Tragedy at first was only a Song in honor of *Bacchus*, which was performed by several persons (who made up the *Musical Chorus*) with dancing and playing upon Instruments.

Since this was too tedious, and might fatigue the fingers, as well as disgust the Audience; they thought of dividing the Song of the *Chorus* into several parts, and of making some kind of *Narrations* between these Intervals. At first one single person spoke them: Then they brought in two speakers, because Dialogues are more diverting: And at last they increas'd the number to three, to give way for more Action. Those who made these *Narrations* upon the Scene or Stage were call'd *Actors*. And what they said being adventitious to the Song of the *Chorus*, these *Narrations* were no more than Ornaments added to a Ceremony, of which they were not a necessary part: And for this reason were they call'd *Episodes*.

Besides, as they were only added to refresh the *Chorus*, and their Assistants; it follows that the *Chorus* had sung before, and were to sing after them: So that these *Episodes* were always to be plac'd between the two Songs of the *Chorus*. Whatever was said before the first, or after the last Song, was not look'd upon as an *Episode*: But these new Additions were made for Reasons distinct from those which were

Actions, that were most simple, and had least of Intrigue, were most of all liable to this Irregularity, because having fewer Incidents, and fewer parts than others, they afford so much the less Matter. A Poet of no great Conduct, very often quite spends himself at the first or second coming on of his Actors between the Songs of the Chorus: And then he finds himself oblig'd to seek out for other Actions to fill up the Intervals behind. Our first French Poets did so. They took to fill up each Act just as many different Actions of a Hero, which had no manner of Connexion, save that they were done by one single person. These Fables are *Episodical*, and such as Aristotle has condemn'd, as we hinted before. His Censure is in these Words:

* Τὸν δὲ ἀπλὸν μῦθον
καὶ περιεχόμενον ἐκαστοῦ
ἀνδρὸς οἷον χρίσκει. Ἀλλὰ
δὲ ἐπεισοδιαῖον μῦθον
ὃ ὃ τὰ ἐπεισοδία μὴ
ἀλλήλα, ἢ τ' ἀπ' ἀλλήλων
ἀνάγμιν ὄναι. Α. Ποιητ.
c. 9.

* Of all the Fables and simple Actions that are, the *Episodical* are the most imperfect. The *Episodical Fable* I call such a one, whose Episodes have no necessary nor probable Connexion.

CHAP. III.

An Explication of the foregoing Doctrine by an Instance.

AS for what has been said, you may consult what the Practice of the Poets was, when they compos'd the Works we have been speaking of. After the Fable was invented, and the Names impos'd on the Personages, the Author was to consider all the Circumstances of his Action, and what parts were finest and most suitable to the Movements of the Tragedy, and to his own design; and then he was to make as many parts of his Representation, as there were distinct Narrations between the Songs of the Chorus.

To give you a famous Instance of this, and such an Instance as is well known to the whole World, we will make use of Seneca's *Oedipus*, without minding the several Absurdities that are therein.

Oedipus begs the Gods to tell him the means of putting a stop to the Plague that then rag'd at Thebes: The Oracle returns him this Answer, That the Death of King *Laius* his Predecessor must be Reveng'd. He makes enquiry after the Murderers, and finds, that he was not only guilty of this Man's Death, but besides was the very Son of *Laius*, whom he had Murder'd, and of *Jocasta* his Widow,

Widow, whom he had Marry'd. He punishes himself severely for it, and by this means restores the Health of his Country.

You see then this Famous Fable, and in truth the most just, and the best invented, as to the *Moral*, and the *Theatral* part, of any Antiquity can boast of.

The * *Grecians*, for whom it was compos'd, were extremely pleas'd to see the Crimes and the Misfortunes of Kings: And the Moral instruction, that was most in

Vogue at that time, was such a one as did beget in Men an Aversion to *Monarchy*, and a love to *Democracy*, which they call'd liberty. What the *Poets* feign'd of *Oedipus* contain'd all these things; and was very proper to prevent the Grandees from Aspiring to Tyranny, and to inspire others with a Resolution never to endure it.

This Fable being thus conceiv'd has very naturally these five parts. The first comprehends the Misfortunes of the People. The second is the Enquiry into the Cause and the Remedy of these Misfortunes. The third is the Discovery thereof. The fourth is the Effect of this Discovery, and the performance of what the Gods requir'd, namely the punishing those Crimes, that had been the Cause of the Ills which the People suffer'd. And the fifth is the Cure and Joy that ought to be the Consequence of the Repentance and Punishment of *Oedipus*.

But this last part was very improper for the *Theatre*. The Calm and Languishing Passions, of which the Spectators upon this occasion were hardly capable, would have enervated and spoil'd the Beauty of those violent Passions so proper to *Tragedy*, and with which the Audience were to be inspir'd. The *Poet* then was not to make an exact *Episode* of this last part. On the other hand, he has divided the second part into two, and has supply'd his five Acts in the following Method.

1. The Plague rag'd in the City of *Thebes*, and brought so many Miseries and dreadful Deaths upon them, that King *Oedipus*, touch'd with the Misfortune of his Subjects, would freely have left the Kingdom: But he hopes for some Relief from the Oracle he has sent to consult, and attends its Answer.

2. *Creon* brings him the Answer, and informs him, That the Cause of the *Thebans* Misfortunes, is the Murder committed upon the person of his Predecessor King *Laius*: And that the Remedy is the punishing of the Murderer. *Oedipus* sets himself upon his duty of punishing the Offence: And to discover who this Murderer was, whom no body as yet knew, he orders *Tiresias* to be sent for. This Priest began by a Sacrifice, but that made no discovery of the thing in question.

3. He then had recourse to more powerful means. He calls up from the shades below the Ghost of *Laius*, who discovers to him that

that King *Oedipus* is the Assassin that ought to be punished; and moreover, that this Prince, who thought himself innocent, was at the same time guilty of Incest and Parricide. But *Oedipus*, inform'd of this only by *Creon*, and supposing he was born at *Corinth*, Son to King *Polybus* and Queen *Meropa*, is very confident of his own Innocence, and gives no Credit to the Report *Creon* made him. He is perswaded 'tis a Falshood invented to out him of the Kingdom, to which *Creon* was next Heir.

4. But at last he understands that he did kill *Laius*, and was his Son, and *Jocasta's*, whom he had ignorantly married.

5. He punishes himself severely, plucks out his own eyes, goes into Exile, and so restores Health and Quietness to his People.

CHAP. IV.

Of the several sorts of Episodes, and what is meant by this Term.

THE Word *Episode* passing from the Theatre to the *Epopée*, did not change its Nature: all the Difference *Aristotle* makes between them is, that the *Episodes* of *Tragedy* are shortest, and the *Episodes* in these great Poems are by much the longest. So slight a Difference should be no hinderance to our speaking of both after the same manner.

This Word, according to *Aristotle*, is capable of three distinct Meanings. The first arises from that Enumeration of all the parts of *Tragedy*, which we mention'd. For if there are only four parts, viz. The *Prologue*, the *Chorus*, the *Episode*, and the *Epilogue*; it follows, that the *Episode* in *Tragedy* is whatever does not make up the other three; and that if you subtract those three, the *Episode* necessarily comprehends all that remains. And since in our times they make *Tragedies* without either *Chorus*, *Prologue*, or *Epilogue*; this Term *Episode* signifies all the *Tragedy* which is made now-a-days. So likewise the *Epic Episode* will be the whole Poem. There is nothing to be subtracted thence, but the *Proposition* and the *Invocation*, which are instead of the *Prologue*. In this sense the *Epopée* and *Tragedy* have each of them but one single *Episode*, or rather, are nothing else but an *Episode*: and if the Parts and Incidents of which the Poet composes his Work have an ill Connexion together, then the Poem will be *Episodical* and defective, as we hinted before.

But

But as all that was sung in *Tragedy* was, according to *Aristotle's* Expression, call'd the *Chorus* in the Singular Number; and yet its being in the Singular was no reason why each part (when it was divided into several) should not be call'd the *Chorus* too; and so several *Chorus's* be introduc'd: just so in the *Episode*, each Incident, and each part of the Fable and the Action, is not only stild a part of the *Episode*, but even an *Entire Episode*. In this sense that † *Aristotle* said, the Madness of *Orestes*, and his Cure by Expiatory Sacrifices, were two *Episodes*. This Term taken in this sense signifies each part of the Action exprest in the Model, and first Constitution of the Fable; such as the Absence and Travels of *Ulysses*, the Disturbance of his Family, and his Presence which re-adjusted all things.

Aristotle tells us of a third sort of *Episodes*, when he says, that whatever is comprehended and exprest in the first Platform of the

Fable is *Proper*, and the other Things are *Episodes*. † This is what he says just after he had propos'd the Model of the *Odysses*.
 † Το μὲν ἐν ἰδίῳ ἔντο
 τὰ δὲ ἄλλα ἐπὶ τοῖς ἑστέροις
 Ibid.

We must then in the *Odysses* it self examine what this third sort of *Episode* is, the better to know wherein it differs from the second. We shall see how the Incidents he calls *proper*, are absolutely necessary: and how those, which he distinguishes by the Name of *Episodes*, are in one sense necessary and probable; and in another sense not at all necessary, but such as the Poet had liberty to make use of, or not.

After *Homer* had laid the first Ground-work of the Fable, and prepar'd the Model, such as we have observ'd it to be, it was not then at his Choice to make or not make *Ulysses* absent from his Country. This Absence was Essential:

* *Aristotle* stiles and places it among those things that are proper to the Fable. But the
 ἡ ἀποδημισία καὶ ἡ ἐκείνου
 πάλαι Το μὲν ἰδίῳ
 ἔντο. Ibid.

Adventure of *Antiphates*, that of *Circe*, of the *Sirens*, of *Scylla*, of *Charybdis*, &c. he does not call such. The Poet was left at his full liberty to have made choice of any other, as well as these things. So that, they are only probable, and such *Episodes* as are distinct from the main Action, to which in this sense they are neither proper nor necessary.

But now let us see in what sense they are necessary thereto. Since the Absence of *Ulysses* was necessary, it follows, that not being at home, he must be somewhere else. Though then the Poet had his liberty to make use of none of these particular Adventures we mention'd, and he made choice of; yet had he not an absolute liberty of making use of none at all: but if he had omitted these, he had been necessarily oblig'd to substitute others

in their room; otherwise he would have left out part of the *Matter* contain'd in his Model, and his Poem would have been defective.

This last sense of the Word *Episode* is not so different from the second as it seems at first sight, since it still informs us that an *Episode* is a necessary part of the *Action*. The difference between them lies in this, that an *Episode* in the second sense is the Foundation and Ground-work of the *Episode* in the third Sense: and that this third Sense adds to the second the probable Circumstances of Places, Princes, and People, where and among whom he was cast by *Neptune*, and abode during his Absence from *Ithaca*.

We must likewise take notice, that in this third Sense, the Incident which serves as a Foundation to an *Episode*, ought to be of some Extent and Compass, and that without this an Essential part of the *Action* and Fable is not an *Episode*. As in the Example of *Oedipus* which we propos'd; the Cure of the *Thebans* is a part proper and essential to the Fable, and would be an *Episode* in the second Sense. But because the Poet has not amplified this Incident by any Circumstance, therefore 'tis not an *Episode* in the third Sense: 'tis only the Foundation of such an *Episode*, which the Poet made no use of. This Observation makes it clear, that in reality the first Platform of the *Action* contains only what is proper and necessary to the Fable, and has not any *Episode*; as *Aristotle* says of the Model he has given us of the *Odysses*.

'Tis therefore in this third Sense we are to understand the Precept of *Aristotle*, which orders us not to form the *Episodes* till after we have made Choice of the Names we would give our Personages. *Homer* could not have spoken of a Fleet and Navy, as he has, if instead of the Names of *Achilles*, *Agamemnon*, and the *Iliad*, he had made choice of those of *Capanes*, *Adrastus*, and the *Thebaid*, as he might have done without spoiling the Essence of the Fable.

If one should form an *Episode*, whereof not only the Names and Circumstances were not necessary, but whose very Ground-work and Foundation was not a part of the *Action*, that serves for the Subject-Matter of a Poem: then this *Episode* would have a sorry Connexion, and would render the Fable *Episodical*. This Irregularity is discernable, when one can so take away a whole *Episode*, without substituting any thing in its room, that this Substraction shall make no *Vacuum*, nor Defect in the Poem. The Story of *Hyppisyle* inserted in the *Thebaid*, is an Instance of these defective *Episodes*. If the whole Narration of this famous Matron were taken away, the Sequel of the main *Action* would be but so much the better; one should not perceive that the Poet had forgot any thing, or wanted the least Member of the Body of his *Action*.

But

But suppose any one should say, "That if these particular Incidents were natural and necessary Members, it would thence follow, that they would not be foreign, extraneous, additional, and inserted Pieces." To this I answer, that all this is true; but withall, that the Thing has retain'd its original and native Name, though it has quite lost its Nature. *Aristotle*, who as well as others has retain'd this dubious Term, prescribes the Rules of *Tragedy* under the Name of *Episode*. Therefore in this Treatise, wherein I only follow his Precepts, I am oblig'd to take every thing in his sense, and not spoil the Nature of the Things, which he explains, by a superstitious adhering to a Word that has chang'd its Nature ever since its first Rise.

I will maintain then that the Word *Episode* in the *Epick Poem* does not signifie an extraneous foreign Peice, even in *Aristotle's* opinion: but that it signifies the whole Narration of the Poet, or a necessary and essential part of the Action and the proper Subject, extended and amplified by probable Circumstances.

This Conclusion deserves a more particular Examination.

CH A P. V.

Concerning the Nature of Episodes.

AN *Episode*, according to *Aristotle*, should not be taken from something else and added to the Action; but should constitute a part of the Action it self. That this is *Aristotle's* Mind, we shall find, if we would but reflect, that this great Master, when he treated of *Episodes*, never made use of this Word to Add, although his Interpreters have found it so natural, that they have commonly made use of it in their Translations and Notes.

When he commends *Homer* for taking only part of the Siege of *Troy* for the Subject-Matter of his *Iliad*; he does not say that he has amplified it by Adding a great many *Episodes* to it; this Expression would distinguish the *Episodes* from the Matter to which they would have been added: But he says,

* Επεισοδίου κίχματα
αὐτῷ πολλοῖς. Poet. c. 23.

† Επεισοδίου διαλαμ-
βάνει τὴν πᾶσιν. Ibid.

* That he made use of a great many *Episodes* of this Action: and this denotes that the *Episodes* of the *Iliad* were part of the Action which is the Subject-Matter thereof. And a few Lines after he says, † That the Poet divided his Poem by *Episodes*. This is what we observ'd before in *Oedipus*.

If

If the *Episodes* were taken elsewhere, and added to the Action, whereof they were not parts, it would signifie little whether they were join'd and connected with one another or no; but they should be join'd to the Action, and this † *Aristotle* should have taught us. And † Τα Ἐπεισόδια μὴ yet he does no such thing, but orders us to ἀλλὰ τῷ. Cap. 9. connect them with one another.

He does not say, that after one has prepar'd the Platform of the Fable, and made Choice of the Names, one should add the *Episodes*; but he makes use of a Verb deriv'd from this Word; as if we should say in our Language, * "That
" the Poet ought to *Episodize* his Action. * Μὲν γὰρ ταῦτα, ἵνα
And elsewhere he says, " That the *Episodes* ἐπιδόη. Cap. 17.
" should not be foreign, but † proper to † Ἐπεισόδια τὰ ἰσχυρὰ
the Subject. σφδίζ. Ibid.

In fine, we might likewise alledge this very Chapter, wherein *Aristotle* lays down the first Draught of the *Odysseis*, and which he concludes by saying, that whatever he has propos'd is proper to the Subject, and that the *Episodes* make up the rest. In this Passage, to give us a reason of the different Extent of Tragedy and the *Epopea*; or to inform us how this last becomes longer: He does not say, that they Add a few *Episodes* to the *Tragick Action*, and a great many to the *Epic*; but he says more exactly, That the *Episodes* of Tragedy are short and concise, and the *Epopea* is extended and amplified by its *Episodes*. He demonstrates this Length of the *Epopea* amplified by the Extent of its *Episodes*, by the Poem of the *Odysseis*, which he brings as an Example, and says, † The Subject of it is long. Now if the *Episodes* † Τὸ Ὀδυσσεὺς μακρὸς
(take the Word in what sense you please) ὁ λόγος ἐστίν. Ibid.

be not part of the Subject, 'tis plain the more room they take up the less is left for the Subject; and that the longer they are, the more straitned and short will the Subject be. If then the *Epopea* be stretch'd out by its *Episodes*, and if for this very reason the Subject of the *Odysseis* is long, as *Aristotle* affirms; it then necessarily follows, that the Subject is nothing else but the very *Episodes*.

The better to demonstrate this Length of the *Odysseis*, *Aristotle* adds, That the Subject of this Poem is a Voyage for several Years; That Neptune did all he could to hinder the chief Personage from returning home; that he does return thither notwithstanding; where he meets with very great Disorders, the Authors of which he punishes, and so restores Peace and Quietness to his Kingdom. This Subject is indeed a great deal longer than that of the *Iliad*; and it requires a longer time, and more Actions for all these things, than for the simple Anger of an

enrag'd and pacified person, where every thing was transacted in one and the same place.

This Length of the *Odyssæis*, compar'd to that of the *Iliad*, would still hold good, though we should subtract from it the several Years which precede the opening of the Poem; and began the Action only at the time of the first Council of the Gods. For it would be still longer than that of the *Iliad* by a fifth part; the one taking up 58 Days, and the other only 47 or 48.

But one cannot exclude from the Subject that which precedes the opening of the Poem, and that which *Ulysses* relates to *Alcinous*,

* Ἀποδημιῖός τειν' ἔτη
πολλὰ. Cap. 17.

† Ὅς μέγα πολλὰ
Πλάγχθη, ἐπεὶ Τροίης
ἰερὴν πόλιν ἔσθον.
Πολλῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων ἴ-
δον ἄστεα, καὶ ῥόν ἔγνων.
Πολλὰ δ' οἷ' ὅγ' ἐκ ποταμῶ
παίδων ἄλγος, ὃν καὶ θυ-
μὸν Ἀργεὺς ἔω' ἔψυ-
χλυν, καὶ ῥόν ἔταισεν.
Odyss. 1.

without contradicting * *Aristotle*, by redu-
cing into the Compass of less than two
Months, what he says took up *several Years*.
This would be to give † *Homer* himself the
Lye, who says, *That his Subject contains*
the Voyages and Travels of a Man, who
after the taking of Troy, saw several Ci-
ties, and knew the Customs of a great
many States and People: he says, that he
suffer'd much by Sea, and did all he could
to secure the Return of his Attendants: as
well as of himself. Now all this did not

happen since the first Council of the Gods. Then, there were se-
ven whole Years, in which he never so much as thought of his
Attendants, for they were all destroy'd. And since that, there
happen'd but one Tempest, and he visited no more than one City.
These seven Years then, and all the Adventures, the Travels, and
the Tempests which preceded, from the Ruin of *Troy* down to
that time, are not extraneous, foreign, or additional Pieces; but
are with the rest the Subject of the Poem. And yet they are
Episodes, as *Aristotle* asserts in these Words, *The rest are Epi-*
sodes: for this Rest is all that he did not name in particular.
Now he spoke only in general, of the Absence of *Ulysses*, of the
Storms he met with, of the Disturbances of *Ithaca*, and of the
Re-establishment of this Prince.

In short, when we discours'd of the Nature of the Fable, we
there took notice of the absolute Necessity the Poet lay under of
keeping *Ulysses* from his Country a very long time; of ordering
his Absence as caused by the Storms he met with; of casting this
Hero upon several different Countries; of raising great Disorders
in *Ithaca*; of making an Example of his Enemies by punishing
them; and of re-establishing the Prince himself. This was so far
necessary to the Subject, that the Poet was not left to his Liberty
of changing it, without destroying his Design, spoiling his Fable,
and making another Poem of it.

But though it was necessary that *Ulysses* should be with strange Princes for several Years; yet it was not necessary that one of these Princes should be *Antiphates*, another *Alcinous*; nor that the Nymph *Calypso*, and the Enchantress *Circe* should be his Hostesses. One might have changed these Persons and States into others, without changing the Design and the Fable. Thus, though these Adventures were part of the Subject after the Poet's Choice of them, yet they were not proper to the Subject.

It is likewise necessary to the Subject, that *Ulysses* revenge himself, and punish his Wife's Courtiers; but 'tis neither proper nor necessary that he should kill them with Javelins, as they were at Supper in his House, at Night too, and none to assist him but his Son and two or three of his Domesticks. He might have appear'd at the Head of an Army, and without the least Surprise have kill'd them with his drawn Sword at their own Houses, or in the open Field. But yet will any Man say, that his killing them with Javelins is not part of the Subject?

In a word, the Revenge he takes, and the punishing of these Miscreants, express'd in short, as we see it in the Model *Aristotle* has left us, is a simple Action proper and necessary to the Subject. It is not an *Episode*, but the Foundation and Soul of an *Episode*: and this same Punishment explain'd and amplified with all the Circumstances of Times, Places, and Persons, is not a simple and proper Action, but an *Episodiz'd Action*, and a true *Episode*: And though the Poet is left at his Freedom and Choice therein, yet it does not follow that the *Episode* is form'd upon a less proper and necessary Foundation.

'Tis in this last Sense, and of this only sort of *Episodes*, we shall generally speak.

C H A P. VI.

The Definition of Episodes.

After what has been said, we may very well infer, That *Episodes are necessary Parts of the Action, extended by probable Circumstances.*

An *Episode* is but a part of an Action, and not an entire one; like that of *Hypsipyle* in *Statius*, which renders this Poem defective and *Episodical*.

That part of the Action which serves for a Foundation to the *Episode*, ought not to continue in its Simplicity; such as it is in the General related in the first Draught of the Fable. *Aristotle*

le having recounted the Parts of the *Odyssæis*, says expressly, that they are proper: and in this Case distinguishes them from the *Episodes*. Thus in the Instance of *Oedipus* which we produc'd, we said, that the Cure of the *Thebans* is not an *Episode*, but only the Foundation and Subject of an *Episode*, which the Poet made no use of. And *Aristotle* (by saying that *Homer* in the *Iliad* has taken but a few Things for his Subject, but that he has made use of a great many *Episodes*) does inform us, that the Subject contains in it self a great many *Episodes*, which the Poet may or may not make use of. That is, it contains the Foundation of them, which one may leave in its general and simple Brevity, as *Seneca* has done the Cure of the *Thebans*; or which one may enlarge and explain, as the same Author has done the Chastisement of *Oedipus*. In this last way 'tis that the Poet makes use of them, and forms just *Episodes* out of them.

The Subject of a Poem may be long after two ways: the first is, when the Poet makes use of a great many of its *Episodes*: and the other is, when he gives to each a considerable Extent. 'Tis by this Method, that the *Epick* Poets extend their Poems a great deal more than the *Dramatick*.

We must likewise take notice, that there are some parts of an Action which of themselves do naturally present us but with one single *Episode*; as, the Death of *Hector*, that of *Turnus*, &c. There are likewise more fertile parts of the Fable, which oblige the Poet to form several *Episodes* of each part, though in the first Model they are express'd in as simple a manner as the rest. Such are, the Fight between the *Trojans* and the *Grecians*; the Absence of *Ulysses*; the Travels of *Aeneas*, &c.

For the Absence of *Ulysses* from his own Country during so many Years together, does necessarily require his Presence elsewhere; and the Design of the Fable obliges him to be cast into several Dangers, and upon several States. Now each Danger, and each State, furnishes Matter for an *Episode*, which the Poet may make use of, if he please.

We conclude then, that *Episodes* are not Actions, but the parts of an Action: That they are not added to the Action, and the Matter of the Poem; but that they constitute this Action and this Matter, as the Members of the Body constitute the Matter of it: That upon this Account they are not deduc'd from any thing else, but the very Foundation of the Action: That they are not united and connected to the Action, but to one another: That all the parts of an Action are not so many *Episodes*; but only such as are amplified and extended by particular Circumstances, and in the manner whereby the Poet rehearses a Thing: And lastly, That this Union between each other, is necessary in the Foundation of the *Episode*, and probable in the Circumstances.

C H A P. VII.

Of the Unity of the Action.

THere are four Qualifications in the *Epick Action*: the first is its *Unity*; the second its *Integrity*; the third its *Importance*; and the fourth its *Duration*. We will begin with the first.

In this place we shall consider the *Unity of the Action*, not only in the first Draught and Model of the Fable, but in the extended and *Episodiz'd Action*. And in truth, if the *Episodes* are not added to the *Action*, but on the contrary are the necessary parts thereof; it is plain, that they ought to be comprehended in it, and its *Unity* still preserv'd: And the Fables which *Aristotle* calls *Episodical* are such, wherein some *Episodes* that are foreign, and not duly connected, add some *Actions* to the *Action* of the Poem, and so spoil the *Unity* of it.

The *Unity of the Epick Action*, as well as the *Unity of the Fable*, does not consist either in the *Unity of the Hero*, or in the *Unity of Time*: This is what we have already taken notice of. But 'tis easier to tell wherein it does not consist, than 'tis to discover wherein it does.

From the Idea I have conceived thereof by reading our Authors, these three things, I suppose, are necessary thereto. The first is, to make use of no *Episode*, but what arises from the very Platform and Foundation of the *Action*, and is as it were a Natural Member of this Body. The second is, exactly to unite these *Episodes*, and these Members, with one another. And the third is, never to finish any *Episode* so as it may seem to be an entire *Action*; but to let each *Episode* still appear in its own particular Nature, as the Member of a Body, and as a Part of it self not compleat.

We have already established the first of these three Qualifications, in the Doctrine we laid down concerning the *Episodes*; and perhaps enough has been said about it: but yet we will clear up this Doctrine by some Instances taken from the principal *Episodes* of the *Aeneid*.

In the Scheme we have drawn of the Fable and *Action* of this Poem, we have observed, that *Aeneas* ought of necessity to be a King newly elected, and the Founder of an Empire rais'd upon the Ruins of a decay'd State: that this Prince should be oppos'd by wicked Men: and lastly, that he should be established by Piety and the Force of Arms.

The first part of this Action is the Alteration of a State, of a King, and of a Priest. And this is *Virgil's* first *Episode*, contain'd in his second Book, wherein the * Poet describes the Subversion of the *Trojan* Empire in *Asia*, the Death of King *Priam*, and of the Priest *Panthus*. To all this he adds the Choice which both Gods and Men make of *Aeneas* to be the Successor of these two deceased Persons, and to re-establish the Empire of the *Trojans* in *Italy*.

The second part of the Action begins, when *Aeneas* sets himself upon his Duty, executes the Orders he receives, and marches for *Italy*. *Virgil* has plac'd almost all this second *Episode* in his third Book: the rest lies in the first, in the fifth, and in the beginning of the seventh.

The third part of the Action is the Establishing Religion and Laws. Religion consists in Sacrifices, in Funeral Rites, and Festival Sports. *Aeneas* performed all these; and

† Hac casti maneat in
religione Nepotes. *A-*
neid. 3.

the † Poet took care from time to time to advertise his Readers, that these Ceremonies were not to be consider'd as so many particular Actions, or as the simple Effects of the Hero's Piety upon some particular Occasions; but as sacred Rites, which he was go-

‡ Hinc maxima porro Ac-
cepit Roma, & patrium
servavit honorem. *A-*
neid. 5.

ing to ‡ transfer into *Italy* under the Quality of the Founder of the *Roman* Empire. By this means, no body can doubt of his meaning, nor take these Acts of Religion, and these *Episodes*, for any thing else but the necessary and essential Parts of his Action and Matter. This Part furnishes the Poet with several *Episodes*, which he distributes into several parts of his Work; as in the third Book, where *Aeneas* receives from *Helenus* the Ceremonies which hereafter he was oblig'd to institute: in the fifth, where he celebrates the Sports hard by his Father's Tomb: And elsewhere almost throughout the whole Poem.

Virgil design'd his sixth Book for the other part about Laws, viz. for the Morality, for the Politicks, and for the forming such a Genius as was to animate the Body-Politick of the *Roman* State.

After these parts of the Action, which contain the performance of the Hero's Designs, we are to consider likewise the Obstacles he meets with, which make up the *Intrigues* of the Action. These Obstacles are the Effects of *Juno's* Passion. And we might say, that this Opposition is no less proper to the *Aeneid*, than the Opposition of *Neptune* is to the *Odysses*. Now we observ'd that *Aristotle* placed the Anger of this God in the first Draught of the Greek Poem among the Incidents that are proper to it.

The

The first of these *Intrigues*, and the most considerable Obstacle of all, is that of *Dido*, which takes up the first and fourth Book. The second is the Burning of his Fleet in the fifth Book. The third is the Love, the Ambition, and the Valour of *Turnus*. This last supply'd him with a great many *Episodes*, being the Cause of all the War *Aeneas* met with in *Italy*. It begins at the seventh Book, and is not over till the End of the Poem. 'Tis thus that the *Episodes* of the *Aeneid* are deduc'd from the Fable and the very Essence of the Action.

The second Thing we said was necessary for the *Unity of the Action*, is the Unity and the Connexion of the *Episodes* with one another. For besides that Relation and Proportion which all the Members ought to have with one another, so as to constitute but one Body, which should be homogeneous in all its parts; 'tis requir'd farther, that these Members should be, not contiguous as if they were cut off and clap'd together again, but uninterrupted and duly connected. Without this, the natural Members would not make up that Union, which is necessary to constitute a Body.

The *Continuity* and Situation of *Episodes* is not exact, when they only follow one another: but they should be plac'd one after another so as the first shall either be necessarily or probably the Cause of that which follows. * *Aristotle*

finds fault with Incidents that are without any Consequence or Connexion; and he says that the Poems, wherein such sorts of *Episodes* are, offend against the *Unity of Action*. He brings, as an Instance of this Defect, the Wound which *Ulysses* receiv'd upon *Parnassus*, and the Folly he counterfeited

* Οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁμοῖον ἡρώδε
μῦθον, ἀναλαβόντων τὸν ἑκάστοτε
ὑμῖν ἡρώδεσσι· ἀλλὰ ἂν
ᾤκει μὴν ἀποδείξαι, ὅτι λί-
γιστον τὴν Ὀδυσσεὺς ὁ-
μολοῖται ὅτι καὶ τὴν Ἰλιάδα.
Poet. cap. 2.

before the *Grecian* Princes: because one of these Incidents could not have happen'd as a Consequence of the other; *Homer* could not have given them a necessary Connexion and Continuity: nor has he spoil'd the *Unity* of the *Odysseis* by such a Mixture.

But he gives us a compleat Instance of the *Continuity* we speak of, in the Method whereby he has connected the two parts of his *Iliad*; which are the Anger of *Achilles* against *Agamemnon*, and the Anger of the same Hero against *Hector*. The Poet would not have duly connected these two *Episodes*, if before the Death of *Patroclus*, *Achilles* had been less inexorable, and had accepted of the Satisfaction *Agamemnon* offer'd him. This would have made two Angers and two Revenges quite different from, and independent of one another. And though both had been necessary and essential to the Fable, to make it appear what Mischief's Discord, and what Advantages Concord is the Cause of: Yet the *Unity* would have been only in the Fable, but the Action would have been double and *Episodical*: because the first *Episode* would

not have been the Cause of the second, nor the second a Consequence of the first.

These two parts of the *Iliad* are joyn'd together very regularly. If *Achilles* had never fell out with *Agamemnon*, he would have fought in person, and not have expos'd his Friend singly against *Hector*, under those Arms that were the cause of this Young man's Rashness and Death. And besides, the better to joyn these two parts with one another, the second is begun a great while before one sees what Event the first ought to have. All the Articles of the Reconciliation are propos'd, and one might say, that this Reconciliation, with respect to *Agamemnon*, is made before the Death of *Patroclus*, and even before it was ever thought of exposing him to a Battel. There was nothing more wanting but *Achilles*'s Consent: and since that was not given till the Death of *Patroclus* had made him resolve upon that of *Hector*; it may be truly affirmed, that the Anger and the Revenge of *Achilles* against *Hector*, which is nothing else but the second part of the Poem, is the only cause of the Reconciliation, which finish'd the first part.

But for the *Unity* of a Body, it is not enough that all its Members be natural, and duly united and compacted together; 'tis farther requisite, that each Member should be no more than a Member; an imperfect Part, and not a finish'd compleat Body. This is the third Qualification we said was necessary to preserve the *Unity of the Epick Action*.

For the better understanding of this Doctrine, we must take notice that an Action may be entire and compleat two ways: The first is, by perfectly compleating it, and making it absolutely entire with respect to the principal Persons that are interest'd therein, and in the principal Circumstances which are employ'd about it. The second way is by compleating it only with respect to some Persons, and in some Circumstances that are less principal. This second way preserves the Action in its regular *Unity*, the other destroys it. We will give you an Instance of each.

The *Greeks* were assembled together to revenge the Affront offer'd to *Menelaus*, and to force the *Trojans* to restore him his Wife, whom *Parris* had stolen away. There happens a Difference between *Agamemnon* and *Achilles*. This last being highly incens'd, abandons the Common Cause, and withdraws himself; so that in his Absence *Agamemnon*'s Army was worsted by the *Trojans*. But the Boldness of the King of Kings puts him upon engaging the Enemy without *Achilles*. Away he marches to give them a general Assault with all his Forces.

The Fight began with the Duel between *Menelaus* and *Parris*. They fight without Seconds, upon Condition that *Helen* should be the Conquerour's; and the War decided by this Combat. Tho' the Anger of *Achilles* was the Cause of this Combat, and whatever Interest he

he might have therein; yet 'tis plain, that *Menelaus*, *Paris*, and *Helen* are so far the principal Personages concern'd, that if this Action had been finish'd with respect to them, it would have been quite finish'd; it would not have made a part of the Action and of the Revenge of *Achilles*, but a compleat Action; which would have put an End to the Revenge, and render'd the Anger of this Hero ineffectual. Therefore *Homer* has not finish'd this Action: *Paris* being hard put to it escapes, and *Menelaus* is wounded with a Dart by *Pandarus*; by this means *Achilles* begins to be reveng'd, and this Incident becomes an exact *Episode*.

Virgil has manag'd the *Episode* of *Dido* another way. He has finish'd it so, that the Union of his main Action is as Regular as the Art of Poetry requires. The Address of this great Poet consists in ordering it so, that *Dido*, in whom this Incident is compleat, was not the chief Personage; and her Marriage was only a simple Circumstance of an Action, that is not finish'd, and yet is the Soul and the only Foundation of this particular Action: in a word, *Aeneas* is the Hero of this *Episode*, which is only invented to retard the Settlement of this Hero in *Italy*.

This is manifest, if we would but reflect on what the Skill and Care of the Poet has left us about it. *Juno*, who carried on all this Intrigue, was very little concern'd for *Dido's* Happiness. If she had lov'd her so well, she should have diverted the *Trojan* Fleet from her Coasts; upon which place she her self did cast them, * which was the only Cause of this Queens Miseries. When she proposes the Match to *Venus* with so much Ardency, 'twas only the top of her Countenance. † Her whole Aim was to keep *Aeneas* in *Africk*, and to bestow on *Carthage* the Empire of the World, which belonged only to *Italy*, and depended upon the Stars of this Hero. You see then the only thing she drives at, the rest is only counterfeit, and a Means whereby she endeavours to accomplish this End.

Dido her self makes it appear how less considerable her Person is than that of *Aeneas*, and that she is only brought in to hinder the Designs of this Prince. 'Tis she, that courts him, and would have him for her King, Husband, and Protector, against the Rage of her Brother and the Incursions of *Iarbas*. But she could only obtain a Marriage for a Month or so, as was customary now and then in those times. *Aeneas* tells her plainly, that the Name of Husband should be no Hinderance to his Departure, and his Designs for *Italy*: and he declares, that this Condition of not leaving *Carthage* was not in the Articles of their Alliance.

* *Felix, heu! nimium
fœlix, si littora tantum,
Nunquam Dardaniæ veri-
gissent nostra carinæ.*
Aeneid. 4.

† *Sensit enim simulatâ
mente locutam,
Quo regnum Italiæ Liby-
cas averteret ora.*

The more an *Episode* may seem to be a compleat Action, the more care should the Poet take to prepare the Reader's mind, before he engages him in it. This is what *Virgil* did in the *Episode* we mentioned. All the beginning of the first Book does sufficiently inform the Reader, that the Stay of *Aeneas* at *Carthage* was only a hindrance and constraint which he was forced to submit to. The Poet is likewise obliged to repeat this Advertisement at the beginning of these *Episodes*; that so the Reader may know to what the Poet engages him. Thus the *Trojans* were scarce got to *Carthage*, but they give out that their Design is for *Italy*. And before *Dido* made the least shew of her Designs upon *Aeneas*; the Poet spends the second and third Books to inform us of this Hero's Design, and the necessity of his going to *Italy*, according to the Orders he received from the Oracles and the Gods. All this is declar'd in his Speech to *Dido* her self. To conclude, All this *Episode* is so full of this main Design, that the Poet is not willing we should lose the sight of it for a Moment. Therefore *Aeneas* is doubtless the Hero of this *Episode*: and we ought to look upon this Incident rather as an Obstacle laid to hinder the Settlement of the *Trojans* in *Italy*, than as the History of *Dido*, in whom it is a compleat Action.

C H A P. VIII.

Of the Faults which corrupt the Unity of the Action.

Homer and *Virgil* have furnished us with Instances of an *Exact Unity*, with the three Qualifications we requir'd. We must now enquire elsewhere for Instances of an *Unity* that is corrupted by *Episodes* that are irregular all these three ways: that is, first such as are deriv'd from something else besides the Action; secondly, such as have no Connexion with the rest of the Poem, nor with the Members and Parts, which are the Matter thereof; and lastly, such as are compleat Actions, independent from the Subject. These vicious and superfluous *Episodes* may be met with not only in the Middle of the Poem, but at the Beginning and the End.

The *Thebaid* of *Statius* furnishes us with all these Instances, as his *Achilleid* has already afforded us an Instance of that false *Unity*, which consists only in the *Unity* of the Hero.

The unfortunate *Oedipus* had pluck'd out his own Eyes; and banishing himself from *Thebes*, left the Government of it to *Eteocles*

cles and *Polynices*, his two Sons. They order'd Matters so, that each of them, one after another, should Reign a whole Year by himself. But the eldest being in possession, when his time was out, refus'd to quit the Throne. *Polynices*, in his Exile, was so happy as to marry the Daughter of *Adrastus* King of *Argos*. This aged Prince takes up the Quarrel, and with the Assistance of his Allies undertakes to settle *Polynices* on the Throne, and to out *Eteocles*. Upon this *Thebes* is beleaguerr'd, and after several Skirmishes, this Difference was decided by the Duel and Death of the two Rival Brothers. This War between the two *Theban* Brothers, is the * *Action* our Poet would relate, and the *Subject-Matter* of the *Thebaid*.

* *Fraternas acies alternaq;
regna prophanis Decertata*

odius, fonsesque evolvere Thebas, Pierius menti calor incidit. Theb. 2.

But observe another Action, or rather another Story. The Goddess *Venus* is offended with the Inhabitants of *Lemnos*, because in all that Island she had neither Temple, Altar, nor Sacrifice. At first she puts the Men out of conceit with their Wives; and then she makes the Women so mad, as to conspire the Death of all their Husbands. This Barbarous Resolution is most unmercifully put in Execution. *Hypsipyle* was the only Woman who had secretly saved her Father King *Troas*, and so ingeniously dissembles the having Murder'd him, that the rest confer the Kingdom upon her, as belonging to that Family.

A little after the *Argonauts*, going in quest of the Golden-Fleece, are forc'd by a Storm to call in and recruit themselves at *Lemnos*. They were very kindly entertain'd there; and the badness of the season gave *Jason*, the chief of these *Hero's*, an opportunity of leaving *Hypsipyle* big with Twins, before he put off to Sea.

She was scarce brought to bed, but 'twas told her Subjects, that they had been cheated, and that King *Troas* was alive, and reign'd in the Isle of *Chios*, whither *Hypsipyle* had convey'd him, tho' she had pretended she had murder'd him. This made the Princess so odious, that fearing the fury of those Women she fled to the Sea-shore, where she was seiz'd on and carry'd off by Pirates. They bestow her on King *Lycurgus*, who makes her the Nurse of his Son *Archemorus*.

The State of this Prince border'd upon *Thebes*, and lay in the Road the Army of *Adrastus* was to pass thither. The *Greeks* met with this famous Nurse as she was alone with her Nursery in a Wood. They were extreme thirsty, all the Wells being dry'd up by the scorching Seasons. They intreat her to give them some relief; she grants their request, and brings them to a Fountain that never was drain'd. She was so forward, that to make the more hast to this wish'd for Stream, she eases her self of her precious burden with which she was intrusted, and leaves *Archemorus* all alone upon the Grass.

She

She goes to quench the *Grecians* Thirst ; and then to satisfy the desire they had of knowing who she was, that had been the saving of them, she makes a large Recital of her own Life.

After she had made an end, and receiv'd the Compliments of *Adrastus*, she returns back to her Prince. But a frightful Serpent had kill'd him by a blow with his Tail. The *Greeks* kill the Serpent, and in honour of the Dead Prince make a splendid Funeral, and institute most magnificent sports, which take up a whole book of the *Thebaid*. The Recitals of *Hypsipyle*, and the Death of *Archemorus* fill up another.

These are foreign *Episodes*, and if they are Regular, I cannot imagine what use the Rules of *Aristotle* can be of in this business. But let us see whether these Incidents have so much as one single Qualification of those which I propos'd as necessary to the Unity of the Action.

The first of these Qualifications is that an *Episode* be proper and drawn from the very Essence of the Fable and the Subject. It would be hard to invent an Adventure more foreign to the War of the *Theban* Brothers, than all this story of *Lemnos*. For what Affinity has the Anger of *Venus*, the butchering of the *Lemnians*, the Designs of the *Argonauts*, and the Amours of *Jason* and *Hypsipyle*, with the Quarrel between *Eteocles* and *Polynices* ? To

* *Humano capiticervicem
pictor equinam Jungere si
velit, & varias inducere
phumas, Undique collatis
membris, &c. Hor. Poet.*

make a mix'd medley of such various Incidents, is just like forming one of * *Horace's* Monsters: And never would a Woman's Head clap'd on to a Horse's Neck appear more Monstrous, than does this *Hypsipyle* tack'd to the War of *Thebes* appear in this Poem. This is the first and most Essential fault of this *Episode*.

The second is in the Connexion, which is not at all in the *Thebaid*, things being clap'd together without the least necessity or probability. For pray what part of the subject of the *Thebaid* is either the Cause, or the Effect of the Massacre at *Lemnos* ? Or of any of the Adventures of *Jason* ?

'Tis true *Hypsipyle* makes this Recital to the *Argives*, as they were going to infect *Thebes* ; but there is a great deal of difference between connecting the Recital of an Action to something, and connecting the very Action to it. If for the Introducing a Narration into the Body of a Poem, and connecting it thereto, so as to make a just *Episode* of it, 'tis enough that this Narration be made in the Presence of the Hero, by some body that has some Interest therein ; there would be no more need of Rules for the due *Uniting of Episodes*. For a Poet to fail of making this Union exactly, it would not be enough that he were Ignorant and Unskilful, but he should be something more ; he should be Malicious, and declare

declare positively against all Connexions whatever. For without 'twere so, he would not be easily inclined to stuff a whole book with the impertinent Description of a Story that was nothing to the purpose.

The sports of the sixth Book of *Statius* are no less irregular. There is nothing in the Action to give them the least Countenance. They have no reference to the War of *Thebes*, to the designs of the *Argonauts*, nor to the mad Practices of *Lemnos*. Nor is it a Consequence of the Stories of *Hypsipyle*; but rather a Consequence of the Recital she made of these Stories. They are tack'd to her Recital at one end, and at the other to the March of the *Grecians*, without the least Necessity and Probability. And how could the fiery Tempers of *Tydeus* and *Capaneus*, and the hot Spirits of the other Commanders away with such languishing and Godly Amusements; and by consequence so opposite to the very Soul of the Poem, which consists altogether in Violence and Impiety?

'Tis true the March of the *Argives* was the Cause of his Death for whom they instituted these sports: But that it should not have been; and since this cause is no way necessary, and offends against all probability, 'tis rather a fresh Fault, than any Excuse. *Hypsipyle* had so little a way to go from the place where she left her Prince, to that whither she conducted the

Grecians; that from thence * she hears this Infant's shrill cry, when Death had almost stop'd his Mouth. Therefore if she had had any concern for leaving *Archemorus*, she should not have staid from him a mo-

* *Moriens vagitus in auras
Excidit, & ruptis immutuit
ore querelis; Qualia non
totas peragunt infomnia
voca. Audiit Hypsipyle.*—

ment. But could not a Souldier have leave to pass a Compliment upon her for a few Minutes or so? To conclude, who did ever know a Nurse so inconsiderate, as to leave her Child alone for several hours in the midst of a Forest, to the mercy of wild Beasts, expos'd to so many other Dangers; and to leave him in this manner without a Guard, tho' so many Thousands were at hand, to whom she had done such a singular piece of service? How could so many Redoubted Princes endure this Unworthy and Foolish exposing of a Child without the least necessity for it? But what signifies it? *Virgil* had his sports, and 'twas but requisite *Statius* should have his too.

The third fault that may be committed against the *Unity* of the Main *Action*, is to compleat an Action entirely, which should serve for an *Episode*. This is likewise one of the Conditions of the Story of *Hypsipyle*: Nothing is more compleat in all its Circumstances. It makes no part of any other Action: 'Tis an entire Action, that has no dependance on any of the *Theban* Worthies, or the other *Grecians* of this Poem; of whom not one has the least interest in what pass'd at *Lemnos*. Thus, the *Unity* of the Action is entirely

entirely ſpoil'd in the *Thebaid* by this Adventure, the Recital whereof makes the Poem *Epifodical*.

This fault of *Statius* is in the very middle of his Poem. It has cut the Action of it into two parts, moſt monſtrouſly divided by this large *Hiatus*, which is ſo miſerably fill'd up with foreign Members, or rather foreign Bodies. But, as I before hinted, theſe ſuperfluities corrupt the *Unity* as much when they are plac'd at the *Beginning* or *End*, as when they are in the *Middle* and *Body* of the Poem. *Statius* affords us inſtances of this kind of fault likewise.

* *Limen mihi Carminis
eſto Oedipodæ conſula
domus. Theb. 1.*

† *Nec gemino bellum
Trojanum orditur ab Ovo.
Hor. Poet.*

‡ *Gentiſque canam pri-
mordis diræ, Sidonios
raptus, & inexorabile
pactum Legis Agenoreæ,
ſcrutantemque ſequora Cad-
mum. Stat. Theb. 1.*

Had he * begun the War of *Thebes* with the Inceſtuous Birth of *Eteocles* and *Polynices*, he would have imitated thoſe, who began the War of *Troy* with the Birth of *Helen*, tho' even that met with † *Horace's* Cenſure. But ‡ he carries matters ſtill higher, goes back as far as the firſt founding of *Thebes*, and opens his Poem with the Rape of *Europa*, which was the firſt Cauſe of building that City.

He ends juſt as he begun. The Quarrel of the two Brothers was manifeſtly decided by their Deaths, there remained no more difficulty, the Siege was rais'd, and all over. And when the Reader expects no more, the Poet, who has quite drained his *Maſter*, gives us notice of his joyning another ſtory thereto, which was the Conſequence thereof, juſt as the Return of *Ulyſſes* is the Conſequence of *Hector's* death, and the taking of *Troy*; and as the Reign of *Ascanius* is the Conſequence of the Eſtabliſhment of *Aneas*. *Thebes* has no longer the *Argives* but the *Athenians* for its Enemies; 'tis no longer defended by *Eteocles*, but by *Creon*; and not aſſaulted by *Polynices*, but by *Theſeus*. The Diſpute is no longer about a Kingdom, but a Tyrant to be puniſhed. 'Tis no more a Siege but the taking of a City. And now no longer is Cruelty, Ambition, and Violence predominant there; but Valour, Generoſity, and Piety, which in the laſt Book deſtroy the Character of the whole Poem. So that the Action is quite Another, in the Cauſe, in the End, in the Perſons, in the Manner, and in all the other Circumſtances. Theſe are the faults which manifeſtly ſpoil the *Unity* of the *Epick* Action.

C H A P. IX.

Of the Integrity of the Action:

ARISTOTLE not only says that the *Epick Action* should be *One*, but * he adds that it should be *Entire, Perfect and Compleat*: And for this purpose, it must have a *Beginning, a Middle, and an End*.

Herein these *Actions* differ from those of *Aesop's Fables*; for there is no necessity that these last should be *Entire and Compleat*. Witness the † *Fable* of the meager hunger-starved *Fox*, who convey'd himself thro' a very small hole into a *Granary* full of *Corn*. When he had cram'd his *Guts*, he was for marching the same way out again:

but he found himself too *Corpulent*. A *Weazel* at a distance seeing him in such a quandary tells him, *he came empty in, and must go as empty out*. Now there's no necessity of finishing this *Action*. *Reynard* is very regularly left in this place without telling what happened to him afterwards; and without troubling ones head, whether he was kill'd upon the spot; or pinched his *Guts* to save his *Carcase*, or whether he escaped at some other *Hole*. This *Action* then is not a *Whole*, because it has only a *Beginning and Middle*, but not an *End*.

These three parts of a *Whole* are too *Generally and Universally* denoted by the Words, *Beginning, Middle, and End*: We may interpret them more precisely, and say, That the *Causes and Designs* which one takes for doing an *Action* are the *Beginning* of this *Action*; That the *Effects* of these *Causes*, and the *Difficulties* that are met with in the *Execution* of these *Designs* are the *Middle* of it; and that the *Unraveling and Resolution* of these *Difficulties* are the *End* of the *Action*.

This *End*, and this *Unravelling* may happen after different ways, and so form several sorts of *Actions*. For sometimes the *Action* ends by the discovery of some person, who was unknown before, as in the *Tragedy of Oedipus*. This Prince thought himself the Son of *Polybus* and *Meropa*, King and Queen of *Corinth*: And he discovers himself to be a *Theban*, the Son of *Laius* and *Jocasta*. Sometimes without any *Discovery*, there is a great change of *Fortune* in some person or other, who thinking himself happy, all on a sudden falls into a *Misery* he never dream'd of; or else on the contrary, becomes from a *miserable*, a very happy person beyond all

Expectation.

* Πρὸς μὴν ἀρχὴν ὅαν
ἔτι τινος, ἔχουσιν ἀρχήν,
ἔτι μέσον, ἔτι τέλος. Poet.
c. 23.

† Forte per angustam re-
tibus Vulpecula rimam Rep-
ferat in cunicum frumenti:
pastaque, rursum Ire focas
pleno tendebat corpore
frustra: Cui Mustela pro-
cul: si vis sis effugere
isthinc, Macra cavum re-
petes arcum, quem macra
subisti. Hor. Lib. I. Ep. 7.

C H A P. X.

That the Action ought to be a Whole.

THIS Proposition seems contrary to what *Aristotle* teaches us, when he says, “ * That the War of *Troy* is a just and perfect *Whole*; That *Homer* has taken but a part of it. That therein he was very Judicious; and that those who instead of Imitating him, have taken this *Whole* for the Subject of their Poems, have taken too much Matter, and have been very indifferent Artists. Does he pretend by this Doctrine, and by these Instances to overthrow what we have cited out of that very treatise of Poetry? Would he teach us that the Subject and Matter of a Poem ought not to be a *Whole*, and an *Entire* and *Compleat Action*, but only a part of an Action? Sure 'tis not likely he should contradict himself thus.

* Μὴ δὲ τὸ πᾶν ποιεῖν ἢ ἀπὸ
ἰστορίας ἀρχὴν ἢ τέλος,
ἐπιχειρῆσαι ποιεῖν ὅλον· οὐδὲ
δὲ ἐν μέρει ἀπολαύειν.
Arist. Poet. c. 23.

We may reconcile this, that appears so contradictory in the Terms, by making this Reflection: That one and the same Action may be consider'd as in the Fable, where the Poet makes use of it; or else as in the History, whence he took it. When the Poet is upon the search after *Matter* for his Fable, he lights upon several sorts of Actions. Some have several parts which may be regularly connected in one Body; and then he may take one of these Actions, entire as it is. But there are others whose parts are so independent to one another, that a Man cannot with any probability joyn them together so as they shall seem to be the Causes and the Consequences of each other. And this is what *Aristotle* condemns under the Name of Many-limb'd Fables. To which he opposes those which have but one only part.

He does not absolutely forbid the Multiplicity of Parts; but he commonly takes such sorts of Words in the worst Sense, which might of themselves be understood in a more favourable one. Thus we observ'd, that he condemned the vicious Plurality of Fables and *Episodes*, under the Terms of *Polymythia*, and *Episodical*, altho' a Man may lawfully put several Fables into a Poem, and there is none but has several *Episodes* in it.

Therefore 'tis in this Sence that he condemns the Plurality of the Parts in an *Epic Action*. We are not to suppose that he condemns it absolutely, and that this Action made use of cannot be a *Whole*. He explains his own meaning sufficiently in the following Words.

G

* As,

* Κρὶν ἔν καθ' ἅπαν ἐν ταῖς
ἄλλαις μιμητικαῖς ἢ μίαν
μιμητικὴν ἑνὸς ἔστιν, ἢ τὴν καὶ
τὴν μῦθον ἐπὶ ποσότητος μι-
μησις, ἔστι, μίαν τε εἶναι,
καὶ ταύτης ὅλης, καὶ τῆς μέρη
συνιστάμεν τῶν ποσότη-
των ἥτις ἂν μεταπίπτει
διακρίσται καὶ κινῆται τὸ
ἅλον* ὁ γὰρ ποσὸν ἢ μὴ
ποσὸν μὴδὲν ποιεῖ ἐπὶ-
σηλον ὅτι εἰδὲ μόνον τὸ
ἔστι. Poet. c. 8.

no means be a part of the Action. So then, 'tis only the Plurality of parts in this last Sence which Aristotle condemns. And he has commended Homer for having taken only a Part of all that passed in the Trojan War.

But yet we are to take special notice that this Retrenchment of all the other parts does not hinder the Anger of Achilles, which is only retain'd, from being a *Whole* in the Poem. 'Tis only a Part with respect to the whole War, and in the History whence Homer took it: But 'tis an Entire and Compleat *Whole* in the Fable and Poem, which Homer has made of it. You see then how these opposite Expressions of Aristotle are easily reconciled in their meaning. The Poet may take out of History an Entire Action, or but a Part of one: but still he must put in his Poem an entire Action, and not a Part only. The Disposition of his Matter regulates this Point, and makes a regular *Whole* of whatever he shall have met with and made choice of. He must make use thereof Variously, according to the Historical Plurality, or Singularity of the Parts, so as to make thereof the Subject of his Poem.

When he takes an Entire Action, as Homer has done for his *Odysseis*, and Virgil for the *Aeneid*; there is nothing to be adjusted, nor any measure to be taken to make this Action appear a *Whole*, and not the Part of another Action. The Reader is already instructed by History, and is in little danger of being mistaken therein. 'Tis enough that the Poet tell wherein his Action consists, without saying wherein it does not. Homer proposes the Return of *Ulysses*, who after the Destruction of Troy, came back again to his own Country: Virgil proposes the Change of a State which is ruin'd at Troy, and re-established in Italy by *Aeneas*. Each of these Adventures have the Conditions of a *Whole* as well in the History whence they were taken, as in the Fables where they are made use of.

But when the Poet chuses only a Part, and out of this Historical Part makes a *Whole* in his Fable; he must take care to give his Readers notice of it, for fear that they, applying the knowledge they

* As, says he, in other Imitations, that which a Man Imitates is one single thing: So likewise, The Fable being the Imitation of an Action, 'tis requisite that this Action be One, Entire, and a Whole, and that the parts be so joyn'd to, and dependent on each other, that one cannot so much as remove any one out of its Place, either to transpose, or retrench it quite, without making a Change in the whole. For whatever can be so placed or omitted, that one cannot perceive the Alteration, can by

they have of the History to what they Read in the Poem, should blame the Author, as if he had said but little on his Subject, or rather had ill managed his design, having only described an imperfect Action.

The Poet's not knowing how to change a Part into a Whole, has perhaps contributed very much to the fault of those Men, whom *Aristotle* blames for having loaded themselves with too much matter. But the Knowledge *Homer* had of this Secret, and his Skill in practising it, has made him merit those Praises which *Aristotle* gives him. He does not only tell us in his *Iliad* that the Anger of *Achilles* is his Subject; but besides that, in express Words he excludes the other parts of the Trojan War. To do this after a Poetical and more Artificial Manner, he makes use of the very Hero's person, whose Action and Design he

Sings. * I am not come hither (says *Achilles*) to wage War against the Trojans; I have nothing to do with them, they have done me no wrong: my design was to maintain the Honour of *Agamemnon* and *Menelaus*. But since *Agamemnon* offers an Injury to my Honour, I renounce that Design, and shall only take care to revenge my self, &c. You may see by this what is the Design of the *Iliad*, and what is not.

* Οὐ γὰρ ἐγὼ Τρώας ἴκτα
ἄλλουσι δὲ χυμπεῖαν Δαῖτα
μερομένη. &c. *Iliad*.
1.

Besides, the Poet has given neither a Beginning nor an End to the Siege of Troy: Nay there is scarce a Middle that is proper to it. For tho' *Jupiter* sends *Agamemnon* to Assault the Town, yet 'tis not with a Design it should be taken, as this Abused Prince imagin'd: But only to be punish'd by the Trojan Arms for the Affront he had put upon *Achilles*, and to satisfy the Anger, and the Revenge of this Hero.

On the other hand, all the parts of this Anger, that are requisite to make it a Whole, are very Conspicuous. It has its Beginning, its Causes, its Effects, and its End. This is what the Poet continues to make out as he had begun; that is, in the Person of his Hero. *Achilles* is not reconcil'd with *Agamemnon* with a Design to revenge all Greece upon Troy, or *Menelaus* upon *Paris*: As long as nothing else was on foot he was inexorable. But *Hector* kills *Patroclus*; then he is reconcil'd, that he may revenge his own particular injury upon *Hector* alone. Tho' he is the Death of other Trojans, yet 'tis only because he meets not with *Hector* himself: 'Tis to fight his way through to this particular Enemy; 'tis because those he kills are his Relations, or his Souldiers; just as before he reveng'd himself on all the Grecians, for the Affront which *Agamemnon* alone had put upon him.

* Λαῖον δ' ἀνίστα, κα-
ρήν-τι δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς. Οὐ
δ' εἰς ἱμεναι ἐπὶ Ἑκτορα
παρὰ βέλεμμεν. Iliad.

As soon as he could meet with *Heſtor*, he * charges all the other *Greeks* to stand off, and would not let them interpose their Quarrel with his. After he had kill'd him, he never pushes on the Advantage which *Heſtor's* Death had given him over the *Trojans*, who were stupified at this disaster, and dejected at so great a loss. He had nothing more to say to 'em, called off the *Grecians* to the Obsequies of *Patroclus*, and vents the rest of his fury by insulting over the Dead Corps of his Enemy.

Lastly, being mov'd at *Priam's* tears, he Restores the body to him, and grants him a Truce for twelve days to perform the Funeral Solemnities. And that we might not look upon the Death of *Heſtor* as the End of the War; the Poet is so far from making the least shew of the *Trojans* being inclin'd to a Peace, or a Surrender, that

* Τῇ δὲ δωδεκάτῃ πελα-
μίζομεν. Iliad. 24.

he makes *Priam* say expressly, * That when the Truce was over, they would be for fighting again upon the twelfth day. If this twelfth day had come, and a Battle ensu'd, then the Anger and the particular Interest of *Achilles* being at an End, these Battles

* Ὡς οἱ γ' ἀμφίποιν τά-
φοι Ἑκτορος ἐπικιδάμοιο.
Lin. ult. Poemat.

would have been really a Part of the *Trojan* War, and of the Common Cause. * *Homer* to prevent this Irregularity has finish'd his Poem together with the Truce and the Funeral of *Heſtor*, before the Fight or the Skirmishes were re- new'd.

Could there be any greater Demonstration, that the *Trojan War* had nothing to do with all this, and that the Subject of this Poem is not a Part of this War in the *Iliad*: But that 'tis a whole, Entire, and Compleat Action, that has no dependance on the taking of this City?

To conclude, we must not confound the Action with the Fable; nor the Design of the Hero in the Action he does, with the Design of the Poet in the Allegory, and in the Moral he teaches. 'Tis well known that a *Wolf* devouring a *Lamb* has no design to give us the Instructions which *Æsop* has drawn from it.

C H A P. XI.

Of the Beginning, Middle and End of the Action.

THE Poet should so begin his Action, that on one hand nothing should be farther wanting for the understanding of what one reads; and on the other hand, that what we read require after it a necessary Consequence. He should end after the same manner, with these two Conditions transposed; the One, that nothing more be expected; and the Other, that what is put at the End of the Action be only a necessary Consequence of some thing which ought to have went before. Lastly, the *Beginning* must be joined to the *End* by a *Middle* that makes no Interval, but which is in it self neither the *Beginning* nor the *End*. This *Middle* must be the effect of something that went before, and the Cause of some other thing that is to come after.

* This makes three parts, each of which taken singly is imperfect, and always supposes One or both of the Other. The *Beginning* supposes nothing before it self, and requires something after it: On the contrary, the *End* requires nothing after it self, but supposes something that goes before: And the *Middle* supposes something that went before, and requires something to follow after. We will explain this Doctrine of *Aristotle* by the Instances we produced.

Eteocles and *Polynices* were equally the Sons and Heirs of *Oedipus* King of *Thebes*. They made a Contract to reign a Year by turns. *Eteocles* began, and his Year expired, refuses to quit his Throne to his Brother. *Polynices* meets with Assistance at *Argos*, and comes to dispute his Title at the Head of an Army. This is an exact Beginning. It requires a Consequence, but not any thing antecedent thereto. Therefore 'twas irregularly done to place before this *Beginning* the Recital of whatever happened from the founding of *Thebes*, and the Rape of *Europa* down to that time.

The Quarrel of these two Brothers ended with their Deaths: which is an exact End? The Reader does not desire one should relate what becomes of *Creon* the Successor of *Eteocles*. Therefore *Senarius* is in the wrong, when he makes *That* a Part of his Poem.

* "ΟΛΕΙΝ ΔΕ ΟΥ ΤΟ ΙΧΕΝ
ΑΡΧΗΝ, ΚΥ ΜΕΣΣΗ ΚΥ ΤΕΛΕΥ-
ΤΩ. ΑΡΧΗ Δ' ΟΥΤΙΝ Δ'
ΑΥΤΟ ΜΕΡ' ΕΞ ΑΡΧΗΣ: ΜΕΤ'
ΜΕΤ' ΑΛΛΟ ΟΥ, ΜΕΤ' ΕΚΕΙΝΟ
Δ' ΙΤΙΘΗΝ ΠΙΘΟΥΚΑΝ ΕΙΝΑΙ Δ'
ΖΗΤΟΥΜΕΝΑΙ. ΤΕΛΕΥΤΑ Δ' ΤΟ-
ΡΑΤΙΟΝ, Δ' ΑΥΤΟ ΜΕΤ' ΑΛΛΟ
ΠΙΘΟΥΚΑΝ ΕΙΝΑΙ. Η ΔΕ ΑΙΤΙΑ-
ΧΗΣ, Η ΟΙΣ ΘΗΤΙ ΤΟ ΠΟΛΥ-
ΜΕΤΩ ΔΕ ΤΥΤΟ ΑΛΛΟ ΕΙΝΑΙ.
ΜΕΣΣΗ ΔΕ ΚΥ ΑΥΤΟ ΜΕΤ'
ΑΛΛΟ, ΚΥ ΜΕΤ' ΕΚΕΙΝΟ ΙΤΙΘΗΝ.
Arist. Poet. c. 7.

He was no less to blame for putting in the *Middle* of his Poem the Story of *Hypsipyle*. For this Narration has no dependance on the *Theban Action*, and supposes nothing before it, and requires nothing after it; and by consequence this Action is neither the *Middle*, nor any other Part of the Quarrel between the two Brothers, or of the Subject of the Poem. These are Examples to be avoided; now we will produce such as are to be imitated.

Homer's Design in the *Iliad* is to relate the Anger and Revenge of *Achilles*. The *Beginning* of this Action is the change of *Achilles* from a Calm to a Passionate Temper. The *Middle* is the Effects of his Passion, and all the Illustrious Deaths it is the Cause of. The *End* of this same Action is the Return of *Achilles* to his Calmness of Temper again. All was quiet in the *Gracian Camp*, when *Agamemnon* their General provokes *Apollo* against them, whom he was willing to appease afterwards at the cost and prejudice of *Achilles*, who had nothing to do with his Fault. This then is an exact *Beginning*; it supposes nothing before, and requires after it the Effects of this Anger. *Achilles* revenges himself, and that is an exact *Middle*; it supposes before the *Beginning* of the Anger of *Achilles*, who is provoked. This Revenge is the Effect of it. Then this *Middle* requires after it the Effect of this Revenge, which is the satisfaction of *Achilles*; for the Revenge had not been compleat, unless *Achilles* had been satisfied. By this means, the Poet makes his Hero, after he was glutted, as I may so say, by the mischief he had done to *Agamemnon*, by the Death of *Hector*, and the Honour he did his Friend, by insulting o'er his Murderer; he makes him, I say, to be moved by the Tears and Misfortunes of King *Priam*. We see him as calm at the *End* of the Poem, during the Funeral of *Hector*, as he was at the *Beginning* of the Poem, whilst the Plague raged among the *Gracians*. This *End* is just, since the Calmness of Temper *Achilles* re-enjoy'd, is only an Effect of the Revenge which ought to have went before; and after this no body expects any more of his Anger. Thus has *Homer* been very exact in the *Beginning*, *Middle* and *End* of the Action he made choice of for the Subject of his *Iliad*.

His Design in the *Odysseis* was to describe the Return of *Ulysses* from the Ruin of *Troy*, and his Arrival at *Ithaca*. He opens this Poem with the Complaints of *Minerva* against *Neptune*, who opposed the Return of this Hero, and against *Calypso*, who detained him in an Island far from *Ithaca*. Is this a *Beginning*? No; doubtless 'tis not. The Reader would fain know why *Neptune* is displeased with *Ulysses*, and how this Prince came to be with *Calypso*. He has a mind to know how he came from *Troy* thither. The Poet answers his Demands out of the Mouth of *Ulysses* himself, who relates these things, and begins the Action by the recital of his Travels from the City of *Troy*. It signifies little whether the *Beginning*

of the Action be the *Beginning* of the Poem, as we shall take notice in the following Book, where we shall treat expressly of the Order our Poets have observed in their Narrations. The *Beginning* of this Action then is that which happens to *Ulysses*, when upon his leaving of *Troy* he bends his Course for *Ithaca*. The *Middle* comprehends all the Misfortunes he endured, and all the Disorders of his own Government. The *End* is the re-*instating* of this Hero in the peaceable Possession of his Kingdom, where he discovers himself to his Son, his Wife, his Father, and several others. The Poet was sensible he should have ended ill, had he went no farther than the Death of these Princes, who were the Rivals and Enemies of *Ulysses*, because the Reader might have looked for some Revenge which the Subjects of these Princes might have taken on him, who had kill'd their Sovereigns: But this Danger over, and these People vanquished and quieted, there was nothing more to be expected. The Poem and the Action have all their Parts and no more.

The Order of the *Odyssey* differs from that of the *Iliad*, in that the Poem does not begin with the *Beginning* of the Action. That of the *Aeneid* is still more different, since the very *End* of the Poem is not the *End* of the Action of *Aeneas*. But we shall say no more of this at present.

The Design of *Virgil* is to conduct *Aeneas* into *Italy*, there to establish his Gods and Religion, and lay the Foundations of the *Roman Empire*. There is this difference between the Return of *Ulysses*, and the Voyage of *Aeneas*, that no one ever questions why a Man returns to his own Country: Though *Homer* had made no mention of the natural Affection he bore to his Country, yet the Readers would never have felt out with him for this Omission. This is a well known Cause; 'tis neither an Action, of which one ought to make a Narration, nor a thing which precedes this Return. But *Aeneas* acts contrary to this natural Affection; he abandons his own Country, to go in search after a strange Land. The Reader then would have the Poet tell him why this Hero leaves *Troy*. Besides *Ulysses* was born a King, but *Aeneas* was not. So that the embarking of *Ulysses* is sufficiently the *Beginning* of the *Odyssey*: But the embarking of *Aeneas* from *Troy*, on Board the Admiral of a Fleet of Twenty Sail, cannot be the *Beginning* of the Action of *Aeneas*, *Aeneas* abandons *Troy*, because it was taken by the *Greeks*: and is King of the *Trojans*, because *Priam* was dead, and he elected in his room.

But if the taking of *Troy* be the Consequence of a ten Year's Siege, should not this War have been related as the necessary Cause of the taking and ruine thereof? This is what the Poet has admirably provided for by bringing it about, that neither the War, nor the long and tedious Siege, should be the Cause of the taking of this

* *Fracti bello, fatisque repulsi Ductores Danaum tot jam labentibus annis. Aeneid. l. 2.*

City. * Therefore he says at first, that the *Greeks* were worsted, that they utterly despaired of being Masters of the City by any of those Measures they had hitherto taken; and that so many Years spent in the War was but so much time lost. So that the Taking of *Troy* depends not upon any thing that went before. The *Greeks* form another Design, which is an exact *Beginning* of an Action; for it supposes nothing before it. The Poet gives it likewise the other Qualification of a *Beginning*, which is the requiring Something after it. Before ever the *Grecians* became Masters of the City, and before ever King *Priam* was kill'd, *Aeneas* is destin'd to re-establish a more noble Religion, and a more illustrious Empire elsewhere. Wherefore the Burning of *Troy* is not an entire Action, nor the Downfall of an Empire, but the Cause and the first Part of the Alteration of a State; and it requires a new Establishment to succeed it.

The Shipping off of *Aeneas*, his Voyages, his Battels, and all the Obstacles he met with, compose a just *Middle*; they are a Consequence of the Destruction of *Troy*, and of the Choice they made of him to transport them into *Italy*; and these same Incidents require an *End*.

The *End* comprehends the Death of *Amata*, that of *Turnus*, the Change of *Juno's* Mind, and the Terms of the Peace, which contain'd all that *Aeneas* pretended to for his Establishment.

But for the better judging of the *Unity* and *Integrity* of the Action (of which we have already spoke) we must add, that there are two sorts of Designs: The first sort have no manner of Consequence, but end with the Action; the others, beside the Action, have likewise some necessary Consequences: And in this last Case these Consequences must be related, if one would have the Poem be as *Entire* and as *Compleat* as it ought to be. Our Poets furnish us with Instances of both these Designs.

The Anger and Revenge of a Man requires necessarily nothing more after it: when it is satisfied and over, all is at an end. When *Achilles* was reveng'd, when he had receiv'd Satisfaction for the Affront put upon him, and when he was once quiet, a Man never enquires what becomes of him afterwards. 'Tis the same case with the Return of a Prince into his own Country: when he is come thither, has put an End to those Disorders which his Absence had caused, and enjoys Peace again, the Reader is satisfied. Nor has *Homer* made any *Episod*e that has transgressed these Bounds.

Virgil's Practice has been otherwise, because he undertook a Design of another Nature. The Establishment of any State does of necessity draw great Consequences after it. If the Poet had taken them all for his Action, it would have been of a monstrous Extent, because the *Roman* Government was not fully settled till af-

ter the Ruin of *Carthage*, which had so long disputed with it for Empire and Liberty : and this very State arriv'd not to its Grandeur and Perfection till under *Augustus*, who was its last, as *Aeneas* was its first, Founder. Therefore *Virgil* has not taken this for the Matter of his Poem ; but † he relates it by

† Super & Garamantas &
Indos Proferet Imperium ;
jacet ex via Sydera tel-
lus, &c. *Æn.* 6.

such Recitals as *Homer* makes use of in his *Odysseis*, when he tells us of the Wound *Ulysses* receiv'd on the top of *Parnassus*. Upon this Account we observed, that the Poet may relate such Incidents as were necessary to the Matter of his Poem, but which notwithstanding were not the Matter thereof. 'Tis thus that *Virgil* practices in the Machines, making *Jupiter* in the first, and *Anchises* in the sixth Book, to make these Prophetical Recitals.

There is something still more Noble in the *Episode* of *Dido*, where by an Allegory and a Conduct, which one can never sufficiently admire, he brings into the Body of his Action all the succeeding History of *Carthage* ; and this so naturally too, that one would think the Poet should have made *Dido* say and act, just as she did, though there had never been any Quarrel between these two States, and though there had never been such a Man as *Hannibal*.

C H A P. XII.

Of the Causes of the Action.

AN Historian does not make his Subject-Matter himself, he speaks nothing but what he knows ; and in the Conduct of a State, we often see Effects, whose Causes are never known. Those who act in it, keep all things in private ; and the more they do so, the greater * Politicians are they accounted. So that on one side the Historian is obliged to declare all the Causes he knows, because these Circumstances are very instructive : but on the other hand, he is justly dispens'd from relating several Causes, because he cannot come to any Knowledge of them.

* Qui nescit dissimulare
nescit regnare.

A Poet has the same Reasons to tell all the Causes of his Action, and he is likewise more oblig'd to it than an Historian, since 'tis more proper and essential for Poetry to instruct, than 'tis for History. But the Poet has not the same Reasons to excuse his Omission of any Cause whatever. He makes his Matter himself, and if he takes any thing from History, 'tis but so far as History suits

ſuits thereto. He muſt feign whatever is not there, or elſe change what is not ſuited to his purpoſe. If 'tis probable that ſome Things may lie concealed from him, becauſe no Man can know every thing; he then is inſtructed by the Gods who do know every thing. *Virgil* is my Warrant in this

† Muſa, mihi cauſas me-
mora. *Æneid* 1.

Caſe before us, † he invokes a Deity, that he may come to the Knowledge of the Cauſes of his Action: and he relates ſuch things, as he could never know but by Revelation; ſince he ſays they happen'd to *Dido* alone, and which ſhe never made any one, no not ſo much as her Siſter, acquainted with. Thus is the Poet oblig'd to tell all the Cauſes not only that he may inſtruct, as we hinted before, but likewiſe that he may pleaſe; for without doubt this is very grateful.

There are three ſorts of Cauſes; ſome are more general and undetermin'd, ſuch as the *Humours* of any one; for 'tis upon *Humour* that every one commonly regulates his Conduct, and acts upon Occaſion. Others are more precise, ſuch as the *Interests* of thoſe that Act. And laſtly, there are others which are more immediate, ſuch as the *Deſigns* which one takes to promote or hinder any thing. Theſe different Cauſes of an Action are likewiſe frequently the Cauſes of one another: every one taking up thoſe *Interests*, which his *Humour* engages him in, and forming ſuch *Deſigns* as his *Humour* and *Interest* prompt him to.

The *Humours* and the Inclinations belong to the Doctrine of the *Morals*, which we ſhall treat of particularly in the fourth Book. We only joyn them here to the two other Cauſes we mention'd; and of all three we affirm this in general, That the Poet ought to inform his Readers of them, and make them conspicuous in his principal Perſonages, when he introduces them, or even before he makes them appear.

Homer has ingeniouſly begun his *Odyſſeys* with the Transactions at *Ithaca* during the Abſence of *Ulyſſes*. If he had begun with the Travels of his Hero, he would ſcarce have ſpoken of any one elſe, and a Man might have read a great deal of the Poem without conceiving the leaſt Idea of *Telemachus*, *Penelope*, or her Suitors, who had ſo great a ſhare in the Action. But in the Beginning he has pitch'd upon, beſides theſe Perſonages, whom he diſcovers, he repreſents *Ulyſſes* in his full Length. And from the very firſt Opening of the Action, one ſees the *Interest* which the Gods had therein.

The Skill and Care of the ſame Poet may be ſeen likewiſe in introducing his Perſonages in the firſt Book of his *Iliad*; where he diſcovers the *Humour*, the *Interests*, and the *Deſigns* of *Agamemnon*, *Achilles*, *Neflor*, *Ulyſſes*, and ſeveral others, nay, and of the Gods too. And in his ſecond Book he makes a Review of the *Grecian* and *Trojan* Armies; which is full evidence, that all we have here ſaid is very neceſſary.

But

But lastly, Since the *Epick Poem* is doubtless much longer than the *Dramatick*; and since 'tis easier to manage the Incidents and the Presence of the Personages in that than in the other: one is not obliged to introduce all of them at the Beginning of the *Epopea* with as much Exactness, as in the first Act of a *Theatral Piece*, where at least one is obliged to give some Item of all those who have any considerable part in the *Intrigue*.

I mention this upon the Account of *Virgil's Practice*. He has been less exact than the *Greek Poet*; for he says nothing of *Thurs*, *Latinas*, *Athars*, and other *Italians*, till the middle of his Poem. But 'tis true likewise, that he has so disposed his Actions as seems to justify this Delay. He has divided the *Aeneid* into two parts more sensibly than *Homer* has his *Iliad* and *Odysses*. He not only makes this Division at the first, and in his Proposition, by saying that * “*Aeneas* suffer'd much

“when he was toss'd about from this Sea to

“that, and from one Province to another;

“and suffer'd also a great deal more in the

“Wars he was engag'd in: but he likewise,

when he begins his second Part, advertises

his Reader of it, and † proposes the things

he is about to mention, as all new, and

quite of another Make from the former. Thus in the first Book

he introduces the principal Personages of his first part; and he on-

ly speaks of those, who were to appear afresh in the second Part,

in his sixth, seventh, and eighth Books. And here, in my mind,

he was less fortunate than the *Greek Poet*.

Besides these more general Causes of the Action and of the main *Intrigues*; there are still some Incidents, and some *Episodes* more particular, of which the Poet must give an Account. This happens commonly not in the Beginning of the Action, but only when the Poet is about to make one of his lesser Recitals. The Reader could not guess, how the Wound of *Ulysses* came, which discover'd him to his Friends; nor why *Camilla* should be in love with War; nor how it came to pass that *Aeneas* met with several Persons in the Shades below, who were to come into the World many Ages after, &c. Therefore the Poet must tell him the Causes of all this.

These Causes must be good, and suitable to the Subject. All the Action of the *Iliad* is founded upon the Anger of *Achilles*. The Cause of this Anger is the Displeasure *Apollo* conceiv'd against *Agamemnon*; because *Agamemnon* likewise in his Anger had affronted the Priest of this God. All these Passions have probable Causes, and such as are suitable to the General Subject of the Trojan War. For as this General Cause is *Helen's* being ravi'd from *Menelaus*; so the other Causes are of the same Nature.

Chryseis

* Multum ille & terris
jactatus & alto: Multa
quoque & bello passus.
Aeneid. 1.

† Major retum mihi
scitur ordo, Majus opus
moveo. *Aeneid.* 8.

Chryseis is ravish'd from her Father, and *Briseis* from *Achilles*. In short, all are stamp'd with the same Character of Injustice and Violence in these Heroes.

If the Hero be a Man of Probity, the *Causes* of all his Designs should be just and commendable, as those in the *Odysses* and the *Aeneid*: And the *Causes* of the Persecution he meets with, must not lessen the Esteem which the Poet would raise of his Probity. *Neptune* persecutes *Ulysses*, because *Ulysses* had blinded his Son *Polypheme*. But this Monster had already devour'd six of the Comrades of *Ulysses*, and was just upon serving *Ulysses* himself and the rest the same Trick. *Aeneas* makes a more particular Profession of his Piety, and accordingly *Virgil* uses him more honourably. The *Causes* *Juno* had to persecute him, did either not touch his Person, or else were much to his Glory; since the only one which concern'd him, was the Choice which Fate made of him to lay in *Italy* the Foundation of the Empire of the World.

* Licet Phrygio servire marito, Dotalisque tunc Tyrios permittere dextris. *Æn.* 4.

* *Juno* is so far from having any scornful or hateful Thoughts for this Hero's Person, that she was willing to trust him with all that was most dear to her on Earth, and make him Lord over her own *Carthage*. She could never have given a more considerable Token of her Love and Esteem for any Man.

C H A P. XIII.

Of the Intrigue, and the Unravelling thereof.

IN what was said about the *Causes* of the Action, one might have observ'd two opposite Designs. The first and most principal is that of the Hero: The second comprehends all their Designs, that oppose the Pretensions of the Hero. These Opposite *Causes* produce likewise Opposite Effects; viz. the Endeavours of the Hero for the accomplishing his Design, and the Endeavours of those who are against it. As these *Causes* and Designs are the *Beginning* of the Action; so these contrary Endeavours are the *Middle* of it, and form a Difficulty and *Intrigue*, which makes up the greatest part of the Poem. It lasts as long as the Reader's Mind is in suspense about the Event of these contrary Endeavours. The Solution or the *Unravelling* begins, when one begins to see the Difficulty remov'd, and the Doubts clear'd up.

Our Poets have divided each of their three Poems into two Parts, and have put a particular *Intrigue*, and the *Solution* of it in each Part.

The

The first Part of the *Iliad* is the Anger of *Achilles*, who is for revenging himself upon *Agamemnon* by the means of *Hector* and the *Trojans*. The *Intrigue* comprehends the three Days Fight which happen'd in the Absence of *Achilles*: and it consists on one side in the Resistance of *Agamemnon* and the *Grecians*; and on the other, in the revengeful and inexorable Humour of *Achilles*, which would not suffer him to be reconcil'd. The Loss of the *Grecians*, and the Despair of *Agamemnon*, prepare for a *Solution* by the Satisfaction which the incens'd Hero receiv'd from it. The Death of *Patroclus* joyn'd to the Offers of *Agamemnon*, which alone had proved ineffectual, remove this Difficulty, and make the Unravelling of the first Part.

This Death is likewise the *Beginning* of the second Part; since it puts *Achilles* upon the Design of revenging himself on *Hector*. But the Design of *Hector* is opposite to that of *Achilles*: This *Trojan* Hero is Valiant, and resolv'd to stand in his own Defence. This Valour and Resolution of *Hector*, are on his Account the Cause of the *Intrigue*. All the Endeavours *Achilles* used to meet with *Hector*, and be the Death of him; and the contrary Endeavours of the *Trojan* to keep out of his Reach and defend himself, are the *Intrigue*: which comprehends the Battel of the last Day. The *Unravelling* begins at the Death of *Hector*; and besides that, it contains the insulting of *Achilles* over his Body, the Honours he paid to *Patroclus*, and the Intreaties of King *Priam*. The Regrets of this King, and the other *Trojans* in the sorrowful Obsequies they paid to *Hector's* Body end the *Unravelling*; they justify the Satisfaction of *Achilles*, and demonstrate his Tranquillity.

The first part of the *Odyssæis* is the Return of *Ulysses* into *Ithaca*. *Neptune* opposes it by raising Tempests, and this makes the *Intrigue*. The *Unravelling* is the Arrival of *Ulysses* upon his own Island, where *Neptune* could offer him no farther Injury. The second Part, is the re-instating this Hero in his own Government. The Princes, that are his Rivals, oppose him, and this is a fresh *Intrigue*. The *Solution* thereof begins at their Deaths, and is completed as soon as the *Ithacans* were appeased.

These two parts in the *Odyssæis* have not one common *Intrigue*, as is to be observed in the two other Poems. The Anger of *Achilles* forms both the *Intrigues* in the *Iliad*; and it is so far the Matter of this *Epopea*, that the very *Beginning* and *End* of this Poem depend on the *Beginning* and *End* of this Anger. But let the Desire *Achilles* had to revenge himself, and the Desire *Ulysses* had to return to his own Country be never so near a kin: yet we cannot place them under one and the same Notion: For the Love of *Ulysses* is not a Passion that Begins and Ends in the Poem with the Action; 'tis a natural Habit, nor does the Poet propose it for his Subject, as he does the Anger of *Achilles*.

Virgil

Virgil has divided his Poem as *Homer* did his *Odyssies*. The first Part is the Voyage and Arrival of *Aeneas* in *Italy*; the second is his Establishment there. But he has connected these two great *Episodes* better by giving them a Common *Intrigue*. He did not take for his first *Intrigue* a Deity, who could act no where but by Sea, as *Neptune*: but * makes Choice of

* Nec Teneris addita Juno
no Unquam aberit. *Aeneid.* 6.

† Annuit his Juno & mentem
letata retorfit. *Aeneid.* 12:

Juno, the Goddess of the Air, who had an equal Power over Sea and Land. She opposed the Voyage of this Hero, and 'tis she likewise that opposes his Settlement. This Opposition then is the General *Intrigue* of the whole Action. The *Solution* is over when † *Juno* is appeas'd by *Jupiter*.

The principal *Intrigue* of the first Part, is the Design of *Dido*, and the Endeavours she used to keep *Aeneas* still at *Carthage*. The Complaints of *Iarbas*, the Orders *Mercury* brought *Aeneas*

‡ Vaginaque eripit enssem
Fulmineum, strictoque
ferit retinacula Ferro. *Aen.* 4.

to be gone, and the re-fitting of the *Trojan Fleet*, are Preparations for the *Unravelling*, which begins at the Departure of *Aeneas*, when he ‡ cut the Cables which held his Ships at Anchor.

Dido might have done more Mischief to *Aeneas*, either by pursuing him as an Enemy to be reveng'd on him, or by following him as his Wife. And though she stay'd still at *Africk*, whatever Liberty Men had in those days of putting away one Wife and marrying another, yet the Poet had made him too honest a Man than to allow him two Wives living at the same time. Let Cases stand how they would, yet *Aeneas* had reason to be afraid of

* Causa mali tanti con-
jux iterum hospita Teu-
cris, Externique iterum
thalami. *Aeneid.* 6.

† Infelix Dido, verus mi-
hi nuncius ergo Venerat
extinctam ferroque ex-
trema sequutam. *Aeneid.* 6.

Dido, and to apply the Prophecy of *Sibyl* to himself, * which said, that the Cause of the Misfortunes he was to suffer should be another foreign Wife, that should entertain the *Trojans*, and be ravish'd from another Man's Bed. Upon this Account she must needs die, and *Aeneas* be certified of her Death. So that this *Unravelling* is not compleat till the sixth Book, † where *Aeneas* meets with the Ghost of this unhappy Queen in the Shades below.

The *Intrigue* of the second Part is form'd out of the Love and Ambition of *Turnus*, who was countenanc'd by the Authority and Passion of the Queen *Amata*. The Articles of Peace which are propos'd in the Eleventh Book, and which are sworn to in the Twelfth, prepare for the *Unravelling*. The Death of *Amata* begins, and the Death of *Turnus* finishes it.

After what has been said of the principal *Intrigues*, the rest are easily discern'd: there are almost as many as there are great and small *Episodes*.

C H A P. XIV.

The Way of forming the Plot or Intrigue.

WE have already observ'd what is meant by the *Intrigue*, and the *Unravelling* thereof; let us now say something of the manner of forming both: and this we shall meet with in the Practice of our Poets; which tells us that these two things should arise naturally out of the very Essence and Subject of the Poem, and that they are to be deduced thence. Their Conduct is so exact and natural, that it seems as if their Action had presented them with whatever they inserted therein, without putting themselves to the Trouble of a farther Enquiry.

What is more Usual and Proper among Warriours, than Anger, Heat, Passion, and Impatience of bearing the least Affronts and Disrespects? This is what forms the *Intrigue* of the *Iliad*: and every thing we read there, is nothing else but the Effect of this Humour, and these Passions.

What more Natural and Usual Obstacle do they who take Voyages meet with than the Sea, the Winds, and the Storms? *Homæ* makes this the *Intrigue* of the first part of the *Odysseis*: and for the second, he makes use of the almost infallible Effect of the long Absence of a Master, whose Return is quite despair'd of; viz. the Insolence of his Servants and Neighbours; the Danger his Son and Wife were in; and the Sequestration of his Estate. Besides, an Absence of almost 20 Years, and the insupportable Fatigues join'd to the Age *Ulysses* was then of, might induce him to believe that he should not be own'd by those that thought him dead, and whose Interest it was to have him be really so. Therefore if he had presently declar'd who he was, and had call'd himself *Ulysses*, they would easily have made away with him as an Impostor, before he had had Opportunity to make himself known to them.

There could be nothing more Natural, nor more Necessary, than this ingenious Disguise, to which the Advantages which his Enemies had taken of his Absence had reduc'd him, and to which his long Misfortunes had inur'd him. This allow'd him an Opportunity, without hazarding any thing, of taking the best Measures he could against those Persons who could not so much as mistrust any harm from him. This Way then was afforded him by the very Nature of

of his Action, that he might execute his Designs, and overcome the mighty Obstacles it presented him with: And 'tis this Contest between the Prudence and the Dissimulation of a single Man on one hand, and the ungovernable Insolence of so many Rivals on the other, which makes up the *Intrigue* of the second Part of the *Odyssies*.

The Conduct of the *Latin* Poet, in the *Intrigues* he forms, has the same Simplicity. The Tempests are made use of in the first Part of the *Aeneid*, just as in the *Odyssies*.

In this very part of the *Aeneid*, *Virgil* suits himself to the Humour of his Hero, as *Homer* does himself to the Humour of *Achilles*. He (*Achilles* I mean) was testy and passionate, *Agamemnon* provokes him by very sensible Affronts. *Aeneas* was of a soft Disposition; the Poet makes use of good Turns, kind Treats, and the most melting, most endearing Passions, to engage him to stay at *Carthage*.

In the Second Part, the Oppositions of *Turnus* and *Mezentius* are no less exact. For Love and Respect oblig'd *Aeneas*, not to abandon a Queen to whom he ow'd so much; and these oppos'd his Embarking for *Italy*: and the Impiety of *Turnus* and *Mezentius* was an Obstacle to the Establishment of the Gods and Religion at that place. In fine, the Love *Turnus* had for *Lavinia*, and the Esteem *Amata* had for this *Italian* Hero above *Aeneas*, are likewise other natural Obstacles, derived from the very Subject; since *Amata* was oblig'd to prefer her Relation to an unknown Stranger; and such an accomplish'd Princess as *Lavinia*, who was sole Heiress to a Kingdom, could not but have her Suitors.

Besides, we observed that *Homer* made use of the Anger of *Apollo*, and that of *Agamemnon*, to stir up the same Passion in *Achilles*; and that the Cause of the War, and the Cause of these Passions, are the Ravishment of three Women. *Virgil* forms his general *Intrigue* after the same manner: He opposes to the Establishing of a Kingdom in *Italy*, the Establishing of another Kingdom in *Africa*. This Opposition is suited to Policy in general, and to the *Roman* History in particular. * *Rome* in its Infancy sees all her Neighbours conspiring against her; for new Governments cast always a Shade upon the old ones.

* Tantum in medio crescentem noctem sibi ac posteris suis metuebant. Liv. lib. 1.

But in these *Intrigues* of the *Aeneid*, there are a great many other Circumstances, wherein *Virgil* makes Allegories and Allusions so correspondent to History and Truth, that without bating any thing of his Quality as Poet, he seems to merit likewise that of an Historian. A Man may see in the Persons of *Aeneas* and *Dido* the very Spirit and Conduct of two great Empires, of which they are Founders. There one may observe the greatest Obstacle

cle the *Romans* ever met with: and this great *Intrigue* in the Fable is a Truth in History. Was it only Fiction, that there was a Design of translating in *Africk* the Empire of the World, which was destin'd for *Italy*? And the Means used to accomplish that End, was it not that Treachery with which the *Romans* have always upbraided the *Carthaginians*? *Dido* casts this Reproach upon her self; and * makes the Application thereof to *Hannibal* and the *Carthaginians*; ordering them to make use of it always against the *Romans*, and to violate their most solemn Treaties, as oft as they suppos'd they could do it to their own Advantage.

This is the Genius and Conduct she inspires her Commonwealth with. *Mercury* likewise advises the Founder of *Rome* not to trust to the Inconstancy of this Woman, which was like the Inconstancy of her City:— And when *Juno* made the Proposal to *Venus* of an Alliance between these two States, *Venus* saw well enough 'twas only a Trick of Dissimulation, to which her present Interests compell'd her to condescend. But I am too minute in a General Treatise of the *Epick Poem*. We end all with saying, that the Event is the same both in the History and the Poem. † 'Tis *Dido's* Breach of Faith that had almost ruin'd *Aeneas*, and which at last became the Ruin of this Foundress of *Carthage*. 'Twas this very same Perfidiousness in *Hannibal* that brought *Rome* into so much Danger, and was at last the Ruin of *Hannibal* and his City.

I shall conclude this Chapter with the three Methods of forming the *Plot* or *Intrigue* of the Poem. One is, to deduce it from the Design of the Hero and the Action, which we have already taken notice of. The second is, to deduce it from the Fable and the Design of the Poet; and this is what we observ'd in the Allegory of two opposite Persons and two opposite Empires. The third is to form the *Intrigue* so, as that the *Unravelling* may be prepar'd for it. I have said nothing as yet of this third Way, and shall explain it by some Instances.

'Tis worth taking notice, how the Poet prepares the Departure of *Aeneas* from *Dido*. The Hero does not come designedly into *Africk*, but is forced thither against his Will by a Storm. He accepts not the Offer ‡ *Dido* made him of her City, if he would stay there: * And in the Marriage it self he takes care to engage himself to nothing that might hinder him from making a Voyage into *Italy* by the first fair Wind. All these Precautions prepare the Reader, that so without the least Surprise

* Nullus amor populis nec
foedera sunt. Exoriare
aliquis nostris ex ossibus
ultor, Qui face Dardanios
ferroque sequare colo-
nos. *Aeneid.* 4.

† Exincti te meque, soror,
populumque patresque Si-
donios, urbemque tuam.
Aeneid. 4.

‡ Vultis & his mecum pa-
riter confidere regnis?
Urbem quam statuo, ve-
stra est. *Aeneid.* 1.

* Fugae nec conjugis un-
quam Prædendi tædæ, aut
hæc in foedus veni. *A-
neid.* 4.

he sees *Aeneas* leave *Carthage*: This is the *Unravelling* of that *Intrigue*.

In the second part the Poet opposes none against his Hero, but such persons as he could deal well enough with, when a Peace was clap'd up. King *Latinus* was to be his Father-in-Law, *Lavinia* his Wife, and the *Latins* his Subjects. It would have been hard for all these persons to have become such upon his Account, after they had been his profess'd Enemies. The Poet has provided for that too. In *Lavinia* there is not to be observ'd either an Inclination

for *Turnus*, or an Aversion to *Aeneas*:

* *Multaque se incusat, qui non acceperit ultro Dardanum Aeneam, generumque asserit urbem.*
Æn. lib. 11.

* The King profers this Princess his Daughter to the Hero as an Article of the Peace, and constantly persists in this Design: The *Latins* only fight against *Aeneas* because they are forc'd to it. Their Legates give such ample testimonies of their Love and Esteem for him, † that they declared, *they should think it an Honour to build the City for him which he demanded in Italy.* The

† *Quin & fatales murorum atollere moles; Saxaque subvehere humeris Trojana juvabit.* *Æn. 10.*

Poet then opposes none against him but *Amata* and *Turnus*, who both perished by their own faults.

Juno indeed could not die; but she is well enough disposed of, by insinuating that all she hopes for, is not absolutely to hinder the Establishment of *Aeneas* (for that she confessed she could not

* At trahere, & tantis moras licet addere rebus, Sanguine Trojano & Rutulo dotabere, Virgo.
Æneid. 7.

do): * But only to put a stop to it a little, and make the *Trojans* and *Italians* pay very dear for it. Thus, having accomplished these two designs, 'twas no hard matter for *Jupiter* to cheer up her Spirits, and make her consent to the rest.

CHAP. XV.

How to dispose, or prepare the Unravelling.

IF the Plot or *Intrigue* must be natural, and such as springs from the very Subject, as has been already urg'd: Then the *Winding up of the Plot*, by a more sure claim, must have this Qualification, and be a probable Consequence of all that went before. As the Readers regard this more than the rest, so should the Poet be so much the more exact therein. This is the End of the Poem, and the last Impression that is like to be stamp'd upon them, and which either leaves them in the satisfaction they sought after,

after, or in such a dissatisfied Temper, as endangers the Reputation of the Author. Let us now see the Instances *Homer* and *Virgil* have left us of this Practice.

The Unravelling of the Plots of the *Iliad* is the Cessation of the Anger of *Achilles*, who was incensed at first against *Agamemnon*, and lastly against *Hector*. There is nothing but what is Natural in the Appeasing of this Anger. The Absence of *Achilles* is the Reason why the *Greeks* are worsted by the *Trojans*. He absented himself on purpose, and 'twas a pleasure to him to see the Loss they underwent; that so he might be reveng'd on *Agamemnon*, who was the only person, that had affronted him. Among the wounded he believes he sees one of his Friends. For his better satisfaction therein, he sends thither his dear *Patroclus*. But this Favourite of *Achilles* had not the same Passions with him. He could not but be extremely concern'd at the miserable condition his Allies were reduc'd to by the Common Enemy. These unfortunate Princes, who had done *Achilles* no wrong, importune *Patroclus* to work him into a better Temper; and to persuade him not to suffer they should be so unworthily us'd any longer, since he could defend them from the Disgrace. *Patroclus* prevails upon *Achilles* to lend him his Men and Armour, and under this Appearance beats back the Enemy. It is likewise Natural that this young Hero, intoxicated with so glorious a success, should push on his Victory farther than *Achilles* had order'd him, and so force *Hector* to fight with and kill him. But shall *Achilles* endure, that so near and dear a Friend should be butcher'd before his face, and in his Armour too, without revenging the Deed? That can never be. So then the Death of *Patroclus* is the Cause why *Achilles*, who is otherwise well enough satisfied and revenged upon *Agamemnon*, should be now reconcil'd to him, and accept of his submission, his presents, and the Oath he made that he had never to do with *Briseis*. This first *Intrigue* then is naturally unroll'd.

The second could not be brought about by a Reconciliation with *Hector*. It was not in this *Trojan* Prince's power to restore *Patroclus*, as *Agamemnon* had *Briseis*. Nothing but *Hector's* death could be a satisfaction for that of *Patroclus*. 'Tis by this that *Achilles* begins his Revenge. Besides, the many Indignities which he offered to the Body of this innocent *Homocide*, and the great Honours he paid to that of his Friend, must needs Naturally mollifie his Grief, and assuage his Passion. To conclude, as *Agamemnon* repented, and wholly submitted to what he pleas'd; so likewise we find King *Priam* prostrate at his feet in as miserable a Condition as a Father could be, that takes on for the Death of his Son. So that there is nothing in the pacified Anger of *Achilles*, and in the Winding up of the Plots of the *Iliad*, but what Naturally arises from the Subject and the very Action.

We shall find the same in the *Odyssæis*. *Ulysses* by a Tempest is cast upon the Island of the *Phæacians*, to whom he discovers himself, and desires they would further his Return to his own Country, which was not very far from thence. One cannot see any Reason why the King of this Island should refuse such a reasonable request to a Hero whom he seems to have in great esteem. The *Phæacians* had heard him tell the story of his Adventures: In this fabulous Recital consists all the advantage they could derive from his presence; for the Art of War which they admir'd in him, his undauntedness under Dangers, his indefatigable Patience, and such like Vertues, were such as these *Islanders* were not used to. All their talent lay in Singing and Dancing, and whatsoever a soft and quiet life esteem'd Charming. And here we see how dextrously *Homer* prepares the Incidents he makes use of. These People could do no less for the Account *Ulysses* had given them of his Life, and with which he had ingeniously entertain'd them, than conduct him home by furnishing him with Shipping which would stand them in little or nothing.

When he came home, his long Absence, and the Travels which had disfigur'd him, made him altogether unknown; and the danger he would have incur'd, had he discover'd himself too soon, forc'd him to a disguise, as we hinted before. Lastly, this Disguise gave him an Opportunity of surprizing those young Gallants, who for several years together had been only us'd to sleep well, and fare daintily.

In the *Latin* Poet, all the hinderance *Aeneas* met with was from *Turnus*. The turbulent Spirit of this Rival drew out the *Italians* to fight the *Trojans*, and cost our Hero as many Subjects, as there were Souldiers slain in both parties; since he was already King of the one, and within a while was to be King of the other. What is to be done then in this case by a Prince so valiant as *Aeneas*,

and so affectionate and tender towards his Subjects? * Is it not the most natural thing in the World, that he should declare he was ready to put a stop to the Quarrel *Turnus* had caused, by fighting singly with him? † *Turnus* for his part sees the *Latins* vanquish'd and dejected; he is sensible of the Reproaches they cast upon him for having expos'd them in his Quarrel, and not daring to answer the demands of *Aeneas*.

* *Æquius huic Turno fuerat se opponere morti.*
Æn. 11.

† *Turnus ut infractos adverso Marte Latinos Defecisse videt, sua nunc promissa reposci, Se signari oculis.* *Æn.* 12.

Can he shift off the Challenge *Aeneas* had sent him? By this means the Duel and the Unravelling of all the Action happens naturally, and is as it were a necessary Consequence of the Disposition of the Fable.

These are the Examples our Poets have left us of *Aristotle's* Rules. * He teaches us that whatever concludes the Poem, should so arise from the Constitution of the Fable, as if 'twere a Necessary or at least a Probable Consequence of all that went before.

* Ταῦτα δὲ διὰ τὴν ἀνάγκην
ἢ ἀνάγκης ἢ πιθανότητος τῶν
μυθῶν, ὅτι ἐκ τῆς συν-
ταγῆς αὐτῶν συμβαίνει, ἢ
ἢ ἀνάγκης, ἢ κατὰ τὸ
εἶδος τῶν μυθῶν ταῦτα.
Poet. c. 10.

CHAP. XVI.

Of the several sorts of Actions.

THE several Effects which the *Unravelling* of the Plot produces, and the different States to which it reduces the persons, divide the Actions into so many sorts.

The *Unravelling* of the *Intrigue* may be by changing of any one's fortune from good to bad, as that of *Oedipus*; or from bad to good, as that of *Cinna*. *Oedipus* seems to be innocent; and in the very moment he thought himself Master of two Kingdoms, he finds himself guilty of Incest and Parricide, and becomes miserable, blind, and an exile. *Cinna*, on the other hand, is condemn'd, and look's for nothing else but a cruel punishment; and contrary to his expectation he is freed from Death, reestablish'd in his preferments, and made Master of *Amylia*.

Sometimes these two Contrary Turns of Fortune happen in one and the same Action, as in *Heraclius*. *Phocas* is dethron'd, when he thought himself settled in a sure Poss: And *Heraclius* steps into the place of the Tyrant who was gone to visit the other World.

But let this Turn be what it will, double or single, fortunate or unfortunate, 'tis still call'd a *Peripetia*.

Sometimes it happens by the Discovery of one or more persons, which till then were unknown, as in *Oedipus* and *Heraclius*: Sometimes without any discovery, as in *Cinna*.

But let the Matter end which way it will, whether it be a *Peripetia* without a Discovery, or a Discovery without a *Peripetia*, or both together; this makes a sort of Action which we call *Implex* or *mix'd*. But if the *Unravelling* be without a Discovery, and without a *Peripetia*; if it be a simple passing from trouble and Action, to quiet and Repose, then these Actions and Fables are call'd *single Ones*.

Sometimes likewise by a sub-division of the Fables wherein is a *Peripetia*, *Aristotle* has call'd those *Single*, where the *Peripetia* is

single, and only of one sort, as in *Cinna* : and those *Double*, where the *Peripetia* is double, as in *Heraclius*.

According to this last Division, the Fable of the *Odyssæis* is double, because the *Unravelling* of the *Intrigue* makes *Ulysses* and his party pass from a Miserable to an Honourable State ; and casts his Rivals from their Merriments to a shameful Death. * This Action then is likewise *Implex*. 'Tis not only unravell'd by this double *Peripetia*, but likewise by the *Discovery* of *Ulysses*.

* Η μὲν Ἰλιάς Ἀπλὴ καὶ παρὰ τὸν ἥδ' Ὀδυσσεὺς Περικλυσία. Arist. Poet. c. 24.

There is neither a *Discovery* nor a *Peripetia* in the *Iliad*. Two Generals of the same party fall out, and then agree, after they had both suffered considerable losses : *Achilles* loses his friend *Patroclus*, and *Agamemnon* his Glory and Authority : He is vanquish'd by the *Trojans*, and forc'd to submit to his Inferiour *Achilles*, to acknowledge his fault, and to give him Satisfaction. In the second part, too Enemies fight, and he who was the weakest and knew himself so, is at last vanquish'd and kill'd. This Action then is wholly *Single*.

There is no more *Complexedness* in the *Plots* of the *Æneid*, than in those of the *Iliad*. *Dido*, who came to so miserable a Death, was not more fortunate before that Catastrophe. Her Love for *Aeneas* fills her at first with trouble and disquiet. Her Marriage increases both, and adds thereto the dismal fear, whereby she fore-

* Urbem præclaram Statui, mea mœnia vidi. Ultra virum pœnas inimico à fœdre recepi. Fœlix, heu nimium fœlix si littora tantum Nunquam Dardaniz tetigissent nostra carinzæ ! *Æn.* 4.

saw her Loss, and all the horrors of her Death. * If she had any good Fortune when she reveng'd her first Husband, punish'd the Treachery of her Brother, and was established so gloriously, all this happen'd before the *Trojans* arriv'd at *Carthage* : And by consequence having nothing to do with the Action, could not make a *Peripetia*.

Nothing pass'd between *Aeneas* and *Turnus*, that is more complex'd, than that which happen'd in the Quarrel between *Achilles* and *Hector*. So that the Action of the *Æneid* is altogether *Simple*, without a *Peripetia* or a *Discovery*.

Not that the *Æneid* is absolutely without a *Peripetia* ; there are some in the lesser *Episodes*. In the fighting with whirl-bats, *Entellus* is knock'd down at the feet of his Antagonist ; ev'ry one looked upon him as vanquish'd, and *Dares* began to triumph. But when Rage had restored this old Combatant the Force which Age had robb'd him of, on a sudden he leaps up, and *Dares* found himself so over-match'd, and so confounded, that he could not make the least resistance. But the *Quality* of these *Episodes* make nothing against the *Entire Action*. The Fable, properly speaking, is only

only *Complex* when the *Peripetia* or *Discovery* happens in the main *Unravelling*, which is the End of the Action.

I shall not stay here to enumerate all the sorts of *Discoveries* *Aristotle* has mention'd. There is none in the *Aeneid*, for the sake of which I chiefly write: And elsewhere this Subject is commonly handled in the Rules men lay down for the *Dramatic Poem*, where is the most occasion for them.

But I cannot omit the *Conclusion* of the Action; 'Tis a consequence of the *Unravelling*, and a part or a necessary *Qualification* of the *Integrity* of the Poem.

C H A P. XVII.

Of the Conclusion of the Action.

THAT which we call here the *Conclusion of the Epick Action* is the very last passage from Agitation and Trouble, to Quiet and Repose: So that there is a great deal of difference between the *Unravelling* and the *Conclusion* of an Action. This last is nothing else but a kind of moment without Extent and Duration: But the first is of some length, since it Comprehends all that happens after the *Plot*. Besides, there are a great many *Unravellings* in a Poem, because there are a great many *Intrigues*: All that are before the last make no kind of Cessation, but start up new Difficulties, which is quite contrary to the *Conclusion*. The *Conclusion* then is the End of the last *Unravelling*, so that there can be no more than One.

This Doctrine is a Consequence of that which we laid down concerning *Episodes*. None of them, as we urg'd, should be *Entire*; and only the last can be regularly finish'd. A great many *Conclusions* then is no where to be found but in *Episodical Poems*, as in the *Thebaid* of *Statius*, where he has finish'd the Story of *Hyppolyte*.

But now for some better Instances in the practice of our two Poets.

The first part of *Virgil's Poem* is the Voyage of *Aeneas* from *Troy* to *Italy*. The *Plot* is the Difficulty of getting thither, and the opposition of *Juno* who raises Storms, and other obstacles against him. The *Unravelling* begins at the last Voyage of the Hero from *Sicily* (which he leaves in the fifth Book) to *Italy* and the Mouth of *Tyber*, where he arrives in the sixth and Seventh Book. This *Unravelling* * puts an End to the * *Et vos audite laborem*
Labours and hazards of the Voyage. But *Prima tulit furor* *Aen. 7.*

† O tandem magnis pelagi
defuncte periclis, Sed terra
graviora manent. *Æn.* 6.
does it put an End to all the Troubles and
Dangers of *Aeneas*? No: † On the con-
trary it casts him upon greater. It leaves
him not in Repose, but puts him upon
more Action and more business than ever he had before. And
therefore 'tis not the *Conclusion*.

The *Conclusion* is not always joyn'd to the *Solution* of that *In-
trigue* which seems to be most general, as was the Design of *Juno*
in the *Aeneid*. This Goddess gives over acting. but *Aeneas* does not.
He has still *Turnus* to deal withal. In a word, since the Poet does not
sing the Action of *Juno*, but of *Aeneas*, the Poem and the Action
remain still unfinish'd, even when this Divine Enemy has given
over. All the *Conclusion* then is included in the Death of *Turnus*,
because that puts an End to the Action of *Aeneas*.

'Tis true that even then *Aeneas* had not quite executed his designs,
he had not built his City, nor established his Religion, nor Married
Lavinia. But it must be observ'd that these things are not necessary.
'Tis enough that all Obstacles were remov'd, and that the Reader
be no longer in doubt of what follows. And this is the Case of the
Aeneid. In this particular it is very compleat, and needs no supple-
ment. If one Instance is not enough to justify this Doctrine, we
can have recourse to the *Theatre*. Marriage is very commonly the
very End of *Dramatick* Poems: And yet that is not always per-
form'd before the Spectators. The Actors step in to perform this
Ceremony within doors: No body expects they should come out
again upon the Stage; or that they should tell the Audience of it,

as † *Plautus* has done in one of his Plays,
more to make People laugh, than because
he was forc'd to it.

† Ne expectetis, specta-
tores, dum illi huc ad vos
exeant. Nemo exibat,
omnes intus conficiunt Negotium. Ubi id erit factum, ornamenta ponent. Posi-
dea loci, Qui deliquit vapulabit, Qui non deliquit biber. *Plaut. Cistell.*

Homer has concluded his *Odysseïs* by the league which *Pallas*
makes between *Ulysses* and his Neighbours. And yet he does not
make it appear by the Continuation of the Poem, whether the Ar-
ticles were faithfully kept or no.

He has not us'd the same Method in the *Iliad*. The observation
of the Truce depended upon *Achilles*. The Poet had good reason
to presume that all his Readers were not persuaded of the Moderation
of so passionate a Man. It was a business of the highest Importance
for the *Conclusion* of this Action to convince them that his Anger
was appeas'd. This Hero in the whole series of the Poem had ap-
peared so testy, unreasonable and unjust, that tho' the Poet's pre-
caution was very great and exact, yet one might distrust this ex-
travagant humour, as long as the Body of his Enemy was in a con-
dition of being insulted over. They were then ready to bestow
such Honours upon this Corps, as one might fear would put our

Hero

Hero into a Passion. So that the Poet thought himself oblig'd to carry on the Funeral and the Observation of the Truce to the very End of his Poem: That so he might absolutely convince us of his tranquillity and repose, whose Action and Anger he had undertook to Sing.

After having observed what the *Conclusion* of the Action is, and when it ought to be made, there remains still a third question behind: And that is to know whether the *Conclusion* ought to leave the Hero in a happy State, or whether 'tis allowable to leave him in a miserable Condition.

Our Poets have not given us any Examples of a Hero, that is left in a Miserable and forlorn Condition. Sad *Conclusions* are proper for *Tragedy*: But in that they were more in Vogue formerly, than they are now a-days: Because in the Popular States of Greece, where Monarchy was Odious, nothing was heard with greater pleasure and Ardency than the Misfortunes of Kings. *Aristotle* has still another reason for preferring this kind of Catastrophe to a more happy one. The *Tragical Scene* is the Throne of the Passions, where Terror and Compassion ought to rule over all the rest. Now these two Passions arise naturally from sad Events: And the Spectators going from the Theatre with their minds full of the misfortunes they were Eye-witnesses of, do doubtlessly preserve their tenderness a great deal longer, and resent more such forcible Effects, than if their tears were dried up, and their sighs abated by the satisfaction of a more prosperous Catastrophe.

But these Reasons will not serve for the *Epopea*, since 'tis not so much for refining the Passions, as for making Men put off ill habits, and put on good ones. 'Tis likewise as true, that this does not exclude sad Events. Besides the Nature of the Fable is as capable of Good as Bad persons for its chief Actors. The sad Adventure of the *Lamb* unjustly butcher'd by the *Wolf* is as just, as instructive, and as regular a Subject, as the Generosity of the *Elephant*, who quitted his Anger upon the Innocence of the same *Lamb*.

'Tis true if the Poets in the person of their Hero proposed an Example of Perfection for Imitation, the misfortunes into which this Hero falls, and his unsuccessful Enterprizes, would suit very ill with the designs of these Authors. But the Practice of *Homer* in his *Iliad*, and the Approbation given him by *Aristotle* and *Horace* for the same, will not permit us to think that the design of the *Epopea* should be to give us these fine Ideas of a perfect Hero. These three great men did certainly never pretend that *Achilles*, the Hero of the Fable, was a Model of Virtue.

We cannot then from any of these Principles determine any thing concerning the fortunate or unfortunate End of an *Epick Action*.

But if any heed be to be given to Authority, I do not know any one Instance of a Poet, who finishes his piece with the misfortune

fortune of his Hero. Our three Poems afford us quite contrary Instances; and Statius himself has quite spoil'd the Unity of his Action, because he would not leave upon the minds of his Readers that miserable Fratricide, which was the true Conclusion of it. So that all the Poets seem to conspire for a happy Catastrophe.

In a word, since the *Epick Poem's* Action is of a larger extent than that of the Theatre; it would perhaps be less satisfactory to the Readers, if, after so much pains and so long Troubles with which this kind of Poem is always fill'd, it should at last bring them to a doleful and unhappy end. Achilles as unjust and Violent as he was, yet in his Valour shew'd such an Air of Greatness, which dazzles our sight, and will not let us see his faults so, as to wish him any greater punishment than what he suffer'd by the Death of his friend. In speaking of the Fable, I hinted upon what account the *Iliad* should end thus, because it redounded more to the happiness and the Glory of the Grecians.

Virgil had the same reason to please his Audience. The Romans would have been disgusted and offended, if he had ill used their Founder and Ancestors: And besides in the *Odysseïs* and the *Aeneid* the Poets would have been unjust, and the Readers dissatisfied, if such brave Princes and such noble Souls as Ulysses and Aeneas had been suffer'd to sink under any misfortune. Achilles, who fell far short of their Vertue, was likewise but little less fortunate.

Let the Case be how it will, yet I fancy there needs a great deal of skill to give the Hero of the *Epopéa* a sad and mournfull End, which might be received with a general Applause.

This is what we had to say concerning the Integrity of the *Epick* Action. There remain still two of its Qualifications behind, its Duration, and its Importance: Of each of which briefly.

CHAP,

C H A P. XVIII.

Of the Duration of the Action.

THe time of the *Epick Action* is not so limited as that of the Theatre. * This last (says *Aristotle*) should take up as much time, as the Sun does in going about the Earth, or thereabouts. But the *Epopée* has no fixed time, and in that it differs from the *Dramatick Poem*. These are all the Rules he has left us upon this head. They consist in two Things: The First, That the *Epick Action* is longer than the *Dramatick*; and, Secondly, That the *Epick Actions* may be some longer than others.

* Η μὲν δὲ ἐν μάλιστα
παιγνύται ὑπὸ μίαις πε-
νθήμερον ἢ ἑξαήμερον, ἢ ἑπ-
τάημερον ἀόριστος τῆς χρό-
νου δὲ τῶν διαγίγνεται.
Poet. c. 5.

The First is a Comparison between the *Epopée* and the *Drama*: Concerning which we say that an uninterrupted *Duration* is a great deal more necessary in an Action, which one sees and are present at; than in one which we read, or only hear repeated. It is not natural to imagine one can spend Days and Nights without Sleeping, Eating and Drinking, purely to mind the Event of Things; and that, without moving out of the place, one can be conveyed to several places: And hence arises the *Unity of Time and Place* so necessary to the *Drama*. But neither of these two *Unities* is necessary to the *Epick Poem*, because we read it as an History which we may leave off when we please.

Besides, *Tragedy* being full of Passions, and consequently full of such a Violence as cannot last long, requires a shorter time; and the *Epick Poem* requires a longer time for to give leisure to the Habits, if good, to sink deep into the Minds and Souls of the Readers; or to be rooted thence, if bad. These two Reasons constitute the difference between the *Epick* and the *Dramatick Action*, as to their *Duration*.

But the Difficulty is to know how long these Actions of the *Epopée* should last; and, whether, since as *Aristotle* says they are unlimited, this does not cause some difference between the Actions of the same kind. All we can do in the Case, is to lay down the Practice of our Poets, and to make such Reflexions therein, as *Aristotle* has given us liberty to make.

This Philosopher says, *Whatever is violent cannot last long*; and, in his Poetic he tells us, *That the Manners of the Personages*
are

are either * violent and strong, or calm, sedate and soft. The first cannot last so long as the other. A Man can be good humour'd, peaceable, and prudent all his life-long, and no body will find fault with it : But one would wonder to see him keep up his Anger, and be in a violent agitation of body and mind all that time.

And though this long train of Passions were probable ; yet it would not be necessary in a Poem that is designed to root out, or plant in Habits : Since the Habits are sooner received and impressed by violent Actions, than by such as are gentle and moderate. We ought to conclude then, that the more violence any Action has, the less time it ought to last.

This is what we see in the Practice of our Poets.

The * *Iliad* contains not only the Anger and Passion of *Achilles*, but likewise of the Kings and People that are the Personages of it. The Poet allows this Action seven and forty days only. Nor is this little time designed all for the Anger of *Achilles*, though the most principal and the most violent. We must substract at one End the nine days of the Plague, which were before his Quarrel with *Agamemnon* : And at the other, the eleven days of the Truce which he granted to King *Priam*.

Besides, these seven and twenty days of Anger are not all spent in the Action. The eleven first are allowed for the curing and recovery of the *Grecians* ; and the eleven last for the Funeral-Pomp which *Achilles* bestowed on the Body of *Patroclus*. So that the Fight begins and ends in five days time. Nor does the Fight last all the time ; but on the second day there was a Cessation of Arms for burning the dead on both sides.

To conclude, *Achilles*, the chief Hero of the Poem, and the very Life of all the Violence that reigns there ; he, I say, who being transported with it more than the rest, ought likewise to continue in this Excess less time, fought only one day. By this means all the Poem founded upon Violence lasts but a little while ; And the Duration of that which was most violent is judiciously retrenched by the Poet.

The Design of the *Odyssæis* is quite different from that of the *Iliad* ; so likewise is the management of it, as to its Duration. The Character of the Hero is Prudence and Wisdom. And this Moderation gives the Poet liberty to extend his Action to as long a time as he pleases, and his political Instructions required. Therefore he did not allow this Action some Weeks as he had that of the *Iliad* ; but he takes up eight years and a half, from the taking of *Troy*, at which it begins, to the Peace of *Ithaca*, where it ends.

The *Aeneid* is like the *Odyssëis*. The
 * Character of the Hero is Piety and Meek-
 ness: and Politicks are likewise essential
 thereto. Therefore the *Duration* of the Action is continued after
 the same manner. The Poet makes the recital thereof begin at the
 building of the Wooden Horse, just before the taking of *Troy*. This
 City was taken a great while before the beginning of Summer, so
 that *Aeneas* had time enough to fit out a
 Fleet. † He quits *Troy* at the beginning of
 the first Summer: * arrives at *Sicily* by
 the end of the seventh, and immediately after
 comes to *Italy*, where his Action continues
 one or two Months longer to the Death of
Turnus. All this makes up a little more
 than six Years and a half, and not quite
 seven. This is the *Duration* of the Action of the *Aeneid*.

* Sum pius *Aeneas*, *En. 1.*

† Jam prima inciperat
 æstas, Et pater Anchises
 dare facis vela jubebat.
En. 3.

* Septima post *Trojae* ex-
 cidium jam vertitur æstas.
En. 5.

There is still another way of reckoning the *Time* of the *Epick*
Poem. 'Tis to compute only what the Poet himself relates. By
 this means the *Odyssëis* begins at the first meeting of the Gods;
 and the *Aeneid*, at that time when the Storm cast the *Trojans* upon
Carthage. As for all that went before, we only reckon so much
 time as was requisite for *Ulysses* and *Aeneas* to make the Narration
 of their Adventures in, *viz.* a Night. This way of computing the
Time, reduces the Action of several Years into the space of a few
 Months, and this Computation is no less necessary than the other.
 But because this belongs rather to the *Narration* than the *Action*,
 we reserve it for the ensuing Book.

Here we only regard the *Duration* of the *Action*, as being the
Matter of the Poem. For this reason we reckon not the Incidents
 which are added thereto: Such as the Wound of *Ulysses* upon *Parnassus*,
 and the sequel of the *Italian* History from *Aeneas* down to
Augustus Caesar's Reign.

'Tis enough that we have shown the *Duration* of the Actions of
 the *Iliad*, the *Odyssëis*, and the *Aeneid*, and the difference between
 them; which is so great even in *Homer*, that one of his Actions con-
 tains less than two Months, and the other more than eight Years.

C H A P. XIX.

Of the Importance of the Action.

THE *Epick* Poet cannot insinuate himself into the mind of his Hearers by the Diversions of *Comedy*; nor by the force and vivacity of *Tragedy*. Let him use never so much Artifice to seize upon a Passion, yet if one compares his Recitals with the Action

† *Segnius irritant animos
dimissa per aurem, Quàm
quæ sunt oculis subjecta
fidelibus, & quæ Ipse sibi
tradit Spectator.* Hor.
Poet.

of the Theatre, one may apply thereto what *Horace* says: *That the Soul is less affected with what it bears, than with what it sees.* So that besides the Reasons drawn from the Nature of these Poems, we may likewise from hence conclude, that the *Epick* Poet lies under a greater Obligation than the

Dramatick, of surprizing the minds of his Readers by Admiration, and by the Importance of the things he treats of; and of taking for his Subject a Great, Noble, and Important Action. *Aristotle* requires this Grandeur, and this Lustre in the

* *Ἡ μὲν δὲ Ἐποποιία τῆς
Τραγῆδιæ μιχέει μᾶλλον
μᾶλλον μὲν λόγῳ μῖμος
ἐνταῦς σπουδαίαν ἡκολούθη-
σεν.* Poet. c. 5.

Epick Action, * and says *That the Epopœa and Tragedy do both imitate whatever is most Noble and important.*

But the Action may be important two ways: Either of its self independently from him that executes it; or by the Quality of the Persons, the Poet is pleased to make use of.

Horace excludes mean Personages, and would have them be Crowned Heads: But neither he nor *Aristotle* says any thing to shew that the Action in its own Nature ought to be great and important. And in truth they could not require this Qualification without condemning the Poet, that in their Opinion is the least to blame of any in the World, and without rejecting the Model they proposed. If one considers the two Actions of *Homer* without the Names and their *Episodes*, as *Aristotle* would have them be prepared at first, one shall find nothing in them but what is common, and which requires no higher Qualities, than those a Merchant, a burgomaster, or at most a plain Country-Squire is capable of. You need only reflect upon the two Models we have given of them, one of which *Aristotle* himself drew. One shall find nothing there but what might have happened to ordinary Persons. 'Tis this, "A Man returns to his own Country, and finds a great many disorders in his Family. Two others fall out about a Captive Wench, and break the neck of their Affairs." This teaches us that to make

Action

Action *important*, 'tis enough that it be the Action of noble and important Persons.

'Tis true, *Horace* makes mention of Wars: But there is no need for them, 'tis only by accident that they are in the Poem. I might urge, that this is only upon the Account of the *Hero* who ought to be a Warrior, such as *Achilles*, *Ulysses*, and *Aeneas*. *Homer*, who is cited by *Horace* in this point, shall testify it. There is so little War in the *Odysseis*, that there is not the least colour to think *Horace* meant to affirm that Wars were the *subject Matter*, or a considerable part thereof. The Poet mentions but three Rencounters, that of the *Ciconians*, that of the *Lestrygons*, and that of some *Ithacans*, who were for revenging of their Masters, whom *Ulysses* had murdered at his House. The recitals of these three Battles, if a Man may call these Adventures so, are made in less than forty Verses in all.

But however 'tis, yet the Return of a Man to his own home, and the Quarrel of two others, that have nothing that is great in themselves, become noble and *important* Actions; when, in the choice of the Names, the Poet tells us that 'tis *Ulysses*, who returns back into *Ithaca*; and that 'tis *Achilles* and *Agamemnon*, who fall out with one another at the famous Siege of *Troy*. 'Tis then these Affairs become Matters of State.

But there are Actions that of themselves are very *important*, such as the Establishing, or the Downfall, of a State or a Religion. Such then is the Action of the *Aeneid*. There can nothing be imagined more great, noble, and august, since it comprehends both the Civil State and Religion.

There is yet another way of making an Action great, by the Grandeur of the Personages under whose Names we represent it.

This way is to give a higher *Idea* of these Personages than that which the Readers conceive of all they know to be great. This is performed by comparing the Men of the Poem, with the Men of the present time in which the Poet writes.

Homer says that two Men of his time could not carry the Stone, which *Diomedes* with ease threw at *Aeneas*; and *Virgil* says that the Stone *Turnus* flung at the same *Aeneas*, would have been too heavy a burden for twelve Men in the time of *Augustus*. In short, according to *Homer's* Account, who lived one or two Ages after *Aeneas*, and who pretends that Men's strength was abated to a Moiety of what it was before, this same strength may well be reduced to the pitch *Virgil* would have it ten Ages after. 'Tis by this means these two Poets were willing to render the Subjects of their Poems more great and august by the Strength and Grandeur of their Personages, and by these great *Ideas* which they super-added to those which the Men of their Times conceived.

This very reason obliged them not to represent their Heroes superior to those of former Ages: But the probable diminution from Age to Age, as they supposed, ought on the contrary to give the

* Ἡδὲ γὰρ πρὶν ἱγὰρ ἐν
αἰσχροῖς, ἃ ὑπὸ ὑμῶν Ἀτ-
τῆος ἀμύλων. *Iliad.* 1.
† Hic genius antiquum,
Teuci pulcherrima proles,
Magnanimi Heroes nati
melioribus annis, Iusque
Assaraculque, &c. *Æn.* 6.

Fathers the preference over their Children. *Homer* makes no difficulty of it; and * *Nestor* who had lived two Ages already, says without any Complement to the Princes of the *Iliad*, that they fell short of their Fore-fathers. † *Virgil* also says, that the Times of *Itus* and *Assaracus* were better than those in which his Hero lived.

It seems *Statius* had the same mind to represent the strength of his Heroes, as far surpassing that of *Homer's* and *Virgil's* Heroes, though in truth the Heroes of the one were only the Children of the Heroes of the other two; so prodigious are the Actions he would attribute to some. But 'tis more likely, that herein his whole aim was to amplify to a Prodigy whatsoever he handled. For if by this extraordinary Strength he had a mind to heighten the Grandeur and Importance of his Action, he forgot himself in several Places, and has done something worse than sleep, when he debased it so much in his first Book. 'Tis there, where to shew the Baseness and Poverty of the Kingdom of *Thebes*, he compares it to the Power and Riches of the greatest Empires that have flourish'd since. Is it not pleasant in him to declaim himself against the Design he bestows upon his Heroes, and to ridicule the great labour he puts them upon for a wretched and pitiful Kingdom?

† Bellum est de paupere
Regno. *Thebaid.* l. 1.

† 'Tis for a sordid Kingdom that they strive.

* Tantæ molis erat Ro-
manam condere gentem.
Æn. 1.

How ill an Imitation is this of *Virgil's* *Epi-
phonema*, which gives us so lofty and so just
an Idea of the Importance of his Subject:

* So vast a thing it was to found the
Roman State!

The End of the Second Book.

Monsieur

Monfieur *Boffu's* Treatife
OF THE
EPICK POEM.

BOOK III.

*Concerning the Form of the Epick
Poem, or concerning the Nar-
ration.*

CHAP. I.

Of the Parts of the Narration.

THere are two ways of Relating an Action that is past:
The one is Simple and Historical, when a Man makes
the Rehearsal of it to his Audience without forcing their
Imagination, only leaving them under a Sense that they
are reading a Book, or hearing something or other related. The
other is more Artificial, where the Author makes no Appearance,
nor says any thing of himself. But, by a kind of innocent Magick,
he raises from the Dead, and brings upon the Stage, those very Per-
sons who have done the Action he would represent. He makes
them speak and act over again the same Words and Actions they
spoke

spoke and did before, and in some sort transports his Auditors to the Times when, and the Places where the Action was done. By this means he does not declare it to them after a plain, simple Way, as the *Historian*, but makes them Witnesses of it, and the Action becomes its own Discoverer.

The Actions which Poets imitate, are such Things as are in an equal degree capable of two Forms, each of which constitute a different Species. Such as fall under the most *Artificial* and *Active*

* *Δράμα*, To Act. *Δράμα*, Action.

† *Ἔπος*, To Speak.

Form are call'd *Dramatick Poems*, denoting their Nature by their * Title; and such as are represented by the Poet only, who speaks therein as an *Historian*, are for that very reason call'd † *Epick Poems*, or *Epopées*.

Whatsoever regard the *Dramatick Poet* has to his Spectators, yet the Persons he introduces in his Poem, who are the only Actors therein, are not in the least acquainted with those before whom the Poet makes them speak; nay more, they don't know what they shall do themselves, nor what the Issue of their Projects will be; and therefore they cannot either advertise the Spectators thereof, or beg their Attention, or thank them for it. So that this kind of Poem, properly speaking, has no parts exempt from the Action that is represented. This alone makes the *Comedy* and *Tragedy* entire and perfect, such I mean as are in use now-a-days; that is, without *Prologue*, *Epilogue*, and those other Appendages, which being lost, or left to the Choice of the Poet, have alter'd nothing of the Nature and Integrity of the Poem.

‡ *Ἔπος τῆς Τραγωδίας*.
* *Ἔπος τῆς Δραματικῆς*.

When they are made use of, ‡ they have nothing to do with the *Tragedy* and Action, since they are not made by the Actors.

But in the *Epick Poem*, where the Poet speaks, he says nothing but what is a part of the Poem. So likewise an *Orator* not only alledges his Reasons, and refutes those of the adverse Party; but besides that, prepares his Auditors, begs their Attention, and at last raises the Passions that are proper to his Cause. Nothing of all this is look'd upon as foreign to his Subject: the *Exordium*, *Proposition*, and *Peroration*, are true parts of it, though less necessary than the *Narration* and the *Confirmation*. 'Tis just the same in the *Epopée*. Before the Poet begins the large Recital of his Action, he proposes it in general, and invokes the Gods that are to inspire him. This makes up three parts that have been always look'd upon as necessary, viz. the *Proposition*, the *Invocation*, and the *Narration*. We may add to them a fourth, which is no less necessary, nor less usual; and that is, the *Title* or *Inscription* of the Poem.

There are several others, which signify nothing to the Integrity of the *Epick Poem*. There is a Preface before the *Enoël*, which

which they say was made against the Plagiaries, who might have transcrib'd this Poem, and have had the Credit of it to *Virgil's* prejudice. It is contain'd in the following Verses, where he speaks of his other Works.

*Ille ego, qui quondam gracili modulatus avenâ
Carmen, & egressus sylvis, vicina coegi,
Ut quamvis avido pareant arva colono;
Gratum opus Agricolis: at nunc borrentia Martis....*

I question whether these Verses are proper for a Beginning, where the Reader's mind, not being as yet in a Heat, requires something more mild and just, than in the Sequel, where 'tis easily transported. In my mind, the last of these four Verses seems unworthy of this great Poet. All that needed be said, was sufficiently express'd in the three first.

The other parts are a *Dedication*, to flatter some great Man or other, and an *Epilogue* for the Conclusion of the Poem.

Virgil made use of these two parts in his *Georgicks*. * He begins with the *Proposition*, where he just mentions *Mecenas*, to whom he dedicates this Piece, but says never a word in his Praise. † After this he makes an *Invocation*, wherein he addresses himself to all the Gods that presid'd over *Agriculture*: and then he flatters ‡ *Augustus*, joyning him with the Gods he invokes.

* Afterwards he enters upon his Subject, and begins to treat at large of *Agriculture*. This part is the Body of the Poem, as the *Narration* in the *Epopea*. † Lastly, after he had finish'd his Treatise in four Books, he ends with an *Epilogue* design'd against the Plagiaries, as the Preface of the *Aeneid* is; but with an Air so different, that these Verses seem to be produc'd by another sort of Genius. This is what he has done in his *Georgicks*.

But neither He nor *Homer*, in their *Epick Poems*, have made use of any of these unnecessary parts; so that I shall say nothing more about them. I will now speak particularly to the other four. 1. Of the *Inscription* or Title of the Poem. 2. of the *Proposition*. 3. Of the *Invocation*. 4. and lastly, Of the Body of the Poem, and the *Narration* properly so call'd.

* Quid faciat latus feg-
tes, quo fidere terram
Vertere, Mæcenas, &c.

† Vos ô clarissima mundi
Lumina læbenrem cœlis
quæ ducitis annum, &c.

‡ Tuque adeo, quem mox
quæ sint habitura Deo-
rum Incertum est, &c.

* Vere novo gelidus ca-
nis cum montibus humor
liquitur, &c.

† Hæc super arborum cul-
tu, pecorumque cane-
bam, &c.

C H A P. II.

Of the Title of the Epick Poem.

WE here examine Things upon the Principles we laid down in speaking concerning the *Nature* of the *Epick Poem*. We observed that it is a *Fable*; and we see nothing in the Practice of our Poets that gives us any other Idea of the *Title* and *Inscription* of their Poems, than of the *Titles* of *Æsop's Fables*. They have for their *Title* the Names of the Persons that act in them. There lies this Difference, that all the Personages are nam'd in the *Title* of *Æsop's Fables*, because they are but few, and one is as important as another; but in the *Epick Poem* there is commonly One who is a great deal more considerable than the rest, and the others are too many to be all nam'd. Therefore they only affix the Name of the principal Personage to it. Thus the *Odysseis* and the *Æneid* bear only the Name of *Ulysses* and *Æneas*.

The Example of *Homer* in the *Inscription* of the *Iliad* informs us, that the *Title* of the Poem may be deriv'd from something else besides the Name of the Personages. Perhaps he did not call it the *Achilleid*, because *Achilles* does not act therein, as *Ulysses* and *Æneas* do in the other two Poems. He has as many Sharers in his Dignity as there are Princes in his Alliance. He has a General to whom he should submit, and refusing to do that, he makes but little or no Figure in the whole Action, of which the Subject of the Poem is but a part. He is but little better than a Cashier'd Officer. He is doubtless the most Valiant; but the Poet sings his Anger, not his Valour. And even there, the Anger which the Poet sings is rather that which makes *Achilles* to absent himself from fighting, than that which puts him upon killing of *Hector*. To conclude, the *Fable* consists less in this Anger, than in the Quarrel and Reconciliation, wherein *Agamemnon* had as great a share as he. So that the Poet makes no Scruple to mention them both in his *Proposition*, when he comes as near the *Fable* it self as possible: *I sing*, says he, *the Anger of Achilles, that has done so much mischief to the Grecians, and caused the death of so many Heroes*; * *since the time that Agamemnon and he fell out and parted*. These Considerations ought not to degrade *Achilles* from the Honour of being the chief Personage, which *Homer* has doubtless made him:

* Εἰς δὲ τὴν ὥρην δα-
σιντο ἰσχυροὶ Ἀχαιοὶ
τὸ δαῖτ' ἀνέσθ' ἔκ σ' Ἰφί-
της. *Iliad*. 1.

but they may serve to prove, that though he is the chief Hero of this *Fable*, yet he is not the only Hero, as *Ulysses* and *Æneas* are in the *Fables* that go under their Names.

Statius

Statius and *Lucan* have each of them two Heroes; and they have, like *Homer*, given their Poems the Names of the Places where the Actions were done, and not of the Heroes who did them. But the *Thebaid*, and the *Pharsalia*, are such defective Poems, that there's no relying upon their Authority.

In *Tragedies*, where the Name of the Personage is made use of for the Title, the Poet adds something else to it, when he makes several pieces under the Name of the same Hero. *Seneca* has done this in his two *Tragedies* of *Hercules*. The

* One he names from the Madness which transported him, and the † Other from the Place, where he was burnt. This is the Reason

* *Hercules Furens.*

† *Hercules Oetus.*

why more than one Name is requisite for the Title of *Æsop's Fables*; for there is scarce an Animal, but what is a Hero in several Fables. But this signifies little to the *Epic Poem*: 'Tis rare that an Author makes two of these Fables under the Name of one and the same Person.

Nor do Poets use to denote the Action in the Title of the Poem. Several Things happen'd to *Medea*, *Ulysses*, *Æneas*, and *Troy*; and one might feign a great many under the Names of the *Wolf* and the *Lamb*, which the Title alone would never inform us of. This signifies nothing; the Authors are well enough satisfied with these plain *Inscriptions*, *Medea*, *the Odyssey*, *the Æneid*, *the Iliad*, *the Lamb* and *the Wolf*. And they refer us to the Discourse it self to know what the Action is that is recited.

CHAP. III.

Of the Proposition.

THE *Epic Proposition* is that first part of the Poem, where in the Author proposes briefly, and in the General, what he has to say in the Body of his Work. And here two Things offer themselves to our Consideration; first, What the Poet proposes; and secondly, After what manner he does it.

The *Proposition* should only comprehend the Matter of the Poem; that is, the Action, and the Persons that Act, whether Divine or Humane. We find all this in the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the *Æneid*.

The Action *Homer* proposes in the *Iliad* is the *Revenge of Achilles*; that of the *Odyssey* is the *Return of Ulysses*; and that of the *Æneid* is the *Empire of Troy translated into Italy by Æneas*.

Nor should any one be surpriz'd at *Homer's* way of expressing

* Μῶνεν ἀνὰ θῆκα, Πη-
λιδάδῃ Ἀχιλλεύῳ Οὐλο-
μένῳ. Ἡ μὲν Ἀχαιοὶς
ἐλπίς Ἰθάκῃ. &c.

himself in his first Words, where he says, * he sings the deadly Anger of *Achilles*; nor think he proposes this *Anger* as the Subject of his Poem. He would not then have made the Rehearsal of an Action, but of a Passion. We are not to stop here, since in truth he himself does not. He says, he sings this *Anger* which had been the Cause of so much Slaughter among the *Greeks*, and of so many brave Men Deaths. He proposes an Action then, and not a mere Passion, for the Subject of his Poem; and this Action is, as we already hinted, the *Revenge of Achilles*.

† Ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε Μυ-
σῶν πολέεσσιν. Arma vi-
rumque cano.

‡ Ὅς μάλ᾽ ὅσῳ Πάρι-
ς. Odyss. 1.

|| Trojæ qui primus ab
oris Italian, &c. *Æn.* 1.

So in the two other Poems, a † Man is propos'd at first: but the Proposition does not stop here; it adds either, ‡ that he underwent much in returning home to his own Country; or, || that he went to settle in *Italy*; and both of them propose an Action.

If *Homer's* Design had been to propose the two parts of each Poem; his Design was not to do it very distinctly. Yet we may conceive the first part of the *Iliad* by the Misfortunes of the *Grecians*, and the second by the illustrious Deaths of so many Heroes. The *Grecians* are greater Sufferers than the *Trojans*, and there are fewer Heroes kill'd on their side, but almost all are wounded.

The Proposition of the *Odyssæis* speaks plainly enough of the Travels of *Ulysses*; but it leaves us rather to infer his Re-establishment in *Ithaca*, than discovers it to us. The Poet says, his Hero did all he could to preserve and conduct back his Companions to *Ithaca*; * but that these miserable

* Ἀντὶς ὁ τοῖσιν ἀφείλετο
νόημον ἔμαρ. Odyss.

Creatures were their own Destruction, and that the God whom they had offended would not suffer them to see the happy day of their

Return. By which 'tis plain *Ulysses* did see the Day, and preserv'd himself according to his Wish.

The *Latin Poet* has clearly distinguish'd the two parts of his *Æneid*. At first he makes his General Proposition in two Verses; and then he makes a Division of it, saying in the † first place, that he had suffer'd much both by Sea and Land; and then ‡ secondly, that he had likewise suffer'd much by War.

This is the most considerable Difference between *Homer* and *Virgil*.

* Ἀντὶς μὲν ἰσώδῃ. O-
dyss. 1.

It was enough for *Achilles* to be reveng'd; and * *Ulysses* pretended only to save himself. This is the Scope and End of the *Odyssæis*,
23

as *Aristotle*, in the Scheme he has drawn, very well observ'd. But *Aeneas* had a Settlement to make, and this Settlement was attended with great Consequences. *Virgil* has been so exact, that he has omitted nothing of it. † He advertises us, that his Hero travell'd to *Italy* to build a City, and establish his Gods and Religion there; and he adds, that from this Settlement proceeded the *Latins*, the City of *Alba*, and the *Romans* their Progeny.

† Dum conderet urbem
Inferretque Deos Latio,
genus unde Latinum,
Albanique Patres, atque
alta moenia Romæ.

It will not be amiss to make this one Reflection more, that in the three Poems, the *Proposition* takes notice where the Action of each Poem does begin. * This Beginning of the *Iliad* is the Beginning of the Quarrel between *Agamemnon* and *Achilles*. † The Action of the *Aeneid* begins at *Troy*, from whence *Aeneas* was forc'd to part. ‡ The *Odyssey* does not begin at the Ruin of *Troy*, as the *Aeneid*, but some time after.

* Ἐξ ἧ δὲ τῆς πόλεως δι-
ακρίσεως ἐκείνου Ἀχίλλεως
τὴν ἀναξὶ ἀνδρῶν καὶ ἡρώ-
ων ἀρχή.

† Trojæ qui primus ab
oris . . . Profugus.

‡ Ἐπεὶ Τροίης ἰερόν πλο-
ύσιον ἔσθον.

‡ Διὸς δὲ ἐπαλείψεται βουλὴ,

* Ἐὰν δὲ ξυλίσσῃ μὲν ἄλλος
Ἀντὶς καὶ Διὸς ὕψος.

This is what I had to say concerning the Action propos'd, now for the Persons.

The Divine Persons are mention'd in the three *Propositions*. *Homer* says, that whatever happen'd in the *Iliad* was by † *Jupiter's* Appointment; and that * *Apollo* was the Cause of the Quarrel between *Agamemnon* and *Achilles*.

The same Poet says, that it was *Apollo* likewise who hinder'd the Return of the Comerades of *Ulysses*.

† *Virgil* likewise makes mention of the Fates, the Will of the Gods, and the Anger of *Jano*.

† Fato profugus, Vi super-
rum, & severa memorem
Junois ob iram,

But these Poets chiefly insist upon the Person of the Hero. It seems as if he alone were more properly the Subject-matter of the Poem than all the rest. *Homer* names *Achilles* particularly, and adds *Agamemnon* to him, as we hinted in the former Chapter. *Ulysses* and *Aeneas* are not nam'd, but only implied; and that in such general terms, that we should not know them, had we not Information otherways, that they are the Persons. For what does the *Proposition* of the *Odyssey* say concerning the Return of *Ulysses* from the Ruin of *Troy*, but what might be in the *Proposition* of a Poem, that treated of the Return of *Diomedes*?

This Practice might have perhaps some Respect to the primary Invention of the Poet, who ought at first to feign his Action without Names, and relates not the Action of *Alcibiades*, as *Aristotle* says; nor consequently the Actions of *Achilles*, *Ulysses*, *Aeneas*, or any other in particular: but of an Universal, General,

and Allegorical person. But since *Homer* has done otherwise in his *Iliad* and has mention'd *Achilles* by his own name and that of his Father too; one cannot condemn the practice of naming the Persons in the Proposition.

Besides, the Character which the Poet would give his Hero and all his Work, is taken notice of likewise by *Homer* and *Virgil*. All the *Iliad* is nothing else but Heat and Passion, and that is the

Character of *Achilles*, and the * first thing the Poet begins with. The *Odysseis* in the

* *Μῦθον δαΐδω.*

† *Ἄνδρα μοι ἔειπε.*

† first Verse presents us with the Prudence, Dissimulation and Artifice, that *Ulysses* made

use of to so many different Persons. And in the Beginning of the

Latin Poem, we see the ‡ Meekness and

‡ *Insignem pietate virum.*

Piety of *Aeneas*.

These Characters are kept up by another such like Quality; namely that of a Warriour. The Proposition of the *Iliad* says, that the Anger of *Achilles* cost a great many Heroes their lives: That of the *Odysseis* represents *Ulysses* as Victor of *Troy*, from the Destruction of which he came: And that of the *Aeneid* begins with Arms: I have already observed that *Horace* speaks of Wars and Generals in the Subject Matter of the *Epopæa*.

As for the way of making the Proposition, *Horace* only prescribes Modesty and Simplicity. He would not have us promise too much, nor raise in the Reader's Mind too large Ideas of what we are going to Relate. * His words are these:

* *Nec sic Incipies ut scrip-
tor Cyclicus olim.*

*Fortunam Priami cantabo,
& nobile bellum.*

*Quid feret hic tanto dig-
num propius hiatu?*

*Parturiunt montes nascetur
ridiculus mus.*

*Quanto rectius hic qui nil
molitur ineptè.*

*Dic mihi, Musa, virum cap-
ta post tempora Troja,*

*Qui mores hominum multo-
rum vidit & urbes.*

*Non fumum ex fulgore sed
ex fumo dare lucem*

*Cogitat, ut speciosa dehinc
miracula promat.*

*Antiphaten, Scyllamque, &
cum Cyclope Charybdim.*

Hic. Pœt.

Begin not as th' old Poetaster did,

(*Troy's famous War, and Priam's Fate,*
I sing)

In what will all this Ostentation end?

The Mountains labour, and a Mouse is born.

How far is this from the *Meonian* Stile?

*Muse, speak the Man, who since the Siege
of Troy,*

*So many Towns, such change of Manners
Saw.*

One with a flash begins, and ends in smoke,

The other out of Smoak brings glorious light,

And (without raising expectation high)

Surprizes us with Dazling Miracles:

The bloody *Lestrygons* in humane Feasts,

With all the Monsters of the Land and Sea;

How *Scylla* bark'd, and *Polyphemus* roar'd.

[*Horace's Art of Poetry english'd by Roscommon.*]

And

And in truth what can be more *Simple* and *Modest* than the *Proposition* of the *Odyssæis*, which does not promise us any great Action of this Hero, but only the dangers, and the continual Fatigues of his Voyages, and the loss of his miserable Companions?

We shall find the very same *Simplicity* and *Modesty* in the *Proposition* of the *Æneid*. The Poet does not say his Hero had done much, but only that he had suffered much. Tho' he speaks of *Alba* and the *Roman* Empire; yet he proposes neither as parts of his Matter; but as Consequences which other Heroes had brought to Perfection a great while after. So *Homer* in his *Odyssæis* has spoken of the destruction of *Troy*; but withal as an Action already done, and which his Readers were not to expect would be rehears'd in the sequel of the Poem.

The *Proposition* of the *Iliad* is something more lofty, in that it mentions the Deaths of so many Heroes: But this is so far the Matter of this Poem, that it seems as if it could not have been wholly omitted. And besides, Art might oblige the Poet to make some kind of Conformity between the *Character* of the *Proposition* and that of the whole Poem, which is nothing else but a long series of Heat and Violence. But to conclude, the Poet acquitted himself of these Obligations with so much *Simplicity* and *Modesty*, that one cannot charge upon him the Transgressing of *Horace's* Rule. For he does not say that these Hero's Deaths were the Effect of his Hero's Valour and Courage: He only says that he sings the Anger of *Achilles*, which had brought so many disasters upon the *Greeks*, and had been the Cause of the Death of so many *Hæmians*, who were exposed as a Prey to Birds and Beasts. Certainly if there is any thing of Grandeur here, 'tis not so much in any Glory or Splendor, as in that Trouble and smoke, which will scarce let us see it.

Beside this sort of Bombast, which things proposed with too much glazing produce; or which arises from the Dignity of the Personages, that at the very first are praised unseasonably, and set off with too great Ideas; there is yet another that respects the Person of the Poet. He should speak as Modestly of himself, as of his Hero or his Subject. *Virgil* in plain terms says that he sings the Action of *Æneas*. *Homer* begs his *Muse* to inspire the Action into him, or to sing it for him; this was all. *Claudian* has not followed these Exemplars. * He says, *his Song shall be full of Boldness: That the Poetical Fury, and the whole Divinity of Apollo had so swell'd his Mind and possess'd his Senses, that they had not left any thing Human about him: That the rest of mankind were profane, whose conversation he could no longer endure: With a great deal of such like stuff,*

* Audaci promere canta
Mens congesta jobet. Gressus
removere profani, Jam
furor humanos nostro de
pectore Sensus Expulsi, &
totum spirant præcordia
Phœbum, &c.

These

These Raptures well manag'd, would look well enough in an *Ode*, a *Pastoral*, or some such Piece, that is short enough to preserve them to the last, and where we may suppose them to have been uttered all in a Breath.

But a Poem so long as an *Epopée*, admits not these Rhapsodical *Propositions* from a Poet that is well in his Wits. This is *Horace's* Doctrine, who would have the *Proposition* of the *Epic Poem* be *simple and Modest*; and yet he sticks not in

* Odi Profanum vulgus
& arces. Favere linguis,
Carmina non prius audita
Musarum sacerdos Virgini-
bus puerisque canto. *Hor.*
l. 3. *Od.* 1.

one of his * *Odes* to do what *Claudian* does in the *Proposition* we cited. This Poem of *Claudian* that begins so ill justifies the Rule, which *Horace* has drawn from the Practice of *Homer*: One may even there observe, that those, who are so daring in

what they propose, are so more out of Lightness and Vanity, than out of any knowledge of their Abilities and Art; and that commonly they are the least able to keep up to it. *Claudian* was not able to carry the Terrors which he proposed as the Subject of his Poem any farther than the middle of his first Book: And that Infernal Darkness, which should have eclipsed the light of the Sun, could not take off from the lustre of the Ivory Walls, and Amber Columns of *Proserpina's* fine Palace.

But we will not leave this Chapter without producing some Instances that are contrary to the Practice of *Homer* and *Virgil*. We may reckon six of these sorts of faults. The first is when any thing is proposed that is foreign to the Subject: The second is, the giving too large an Idea of the Subject Matter: The third is, when the Hero appears too dazzling in the *Proposition*: The fourth, when the Poet speaks too favourably of himself: The fifth is the omitting the Presence of the Deity: And the sixth is, when nothing is said that may give a light into the Character of the Hero.

There is scarce one of these faults but may be met with in the *Proposition* of the *Achilleid*. * *Statius*

* Magnanimum Æacidem
formidatumque Tonanti,
Progeniem, & patrio ve-
ritam succedere cœlo,
Diva refer.

prays his Muse to tell him the Story of the Magnanimous Son of Æacus, whose Birth struck the Thunderer himself with Terror, and to whom admittance into Heaven was deny'd, tho he had from thence his Origin.

If *Horace* could not endure that a Poet should propose *Priam's Fate*, and the famous War of Troy, tho in truth this War was Noble and Illustrious: What would he have said of him, who sings a Hero, that strikes Terror into *Jupiter* himself?

This very Poet gives us likewise too favourable a Character of himself, when begging *Phœbus* to bestow upon him new Inspira-
tions,

tions, * he tells him that in his first Poem, he had worthily exhausted those he had received, and brags of his being so excellent a Poet, that Thebes would look upon him as another Amphion.

* Tu modo si veteres digno
deplevimus haustu, Da
fontes mihi, Phœbe, novos
... meque inter præsa
parentum Nomina, cumq;
suo memorant Amphione Thebæ.

He speaks of the Gods in this Proposition, but 'tis more by Chance, than in Imitation of *Homer* or *Virgil*; since if he had been persuaded that Art required so much, he would not have fail'd doing it in the Proposition of the Thebaid.

To conclude, he has given a very sorry Character of his Hero, when he stiles him *Magnanimous*. *Achilles* was certainly very Impatient, Cholerick, and Revengeful. *Homer* made him so, and *Statius* should have kept up the same Character, which this first Poet had given him. * This is one of *Horace's* Rules. But we need not seek any farther than *Statius* himself for a proof of his error in this point. In the Proposition he contradicts this Character of *Magnanimous* which he had bestow'd upon *Achilles* at first: For immediately after, among the Actions he was to mention of this Hero, he mentions one, that is far from *Magnanimity*; namely his cruel Usage of *Hector's* body, when after he had kill'd him, he bound him by the heels to his Charriot, and drag'd him a great many times round the Walls of *Troy*, and the Tomb of *Patroclus*.

* Scriptor, honoratum si
forte reponis Achillem,
Impiger, iracundus, iners,
inexorabilis, acer, &c.
Hor. Poet.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Invocation.

* **HOMER** in his two Poems inserts the Invocation in the Proposition. He does not say that he will relate what *Achilles*, or *Ulysses* has done; but intreats his *Muse* to make the Recital. *Virgil* has these two parts distinct; He first † proposes what he would sing, and then he ‡ begs his *Muse* to inform him about it. In this second part he * inserts the Character of his Hero, which more properly belongs to the

* Μῦσιν ἀοιδὰ θεὰ Ἄρσιν
μοι ἔννεπε, Μῦσα.

† Arma virumque cano.

‡ Musa, mihi causas me-
mora.

* Infuam pietate virum.

first.

first. And this makes it appear, that it signifies little whether they are distinct from each other, or joyn'd together.

But let the way be how it will, the Poet cannot omit the *Invocation*. He speaks of things which he would know nothing of, unless some God or other had reveal'd them to him. He owes his Readers this Example of Piety and Veneration, which is the very Foundation of all the Moral, and the Instructions he pretends to lay down from the Fable: And lastly, since the Gods must be concern'd in it, 'tis unreasonable to dare to bring them upon the Stage, without craving their leave first. So that with respect to the Gods, the Auditors, and the Poet himself, the *Invocation* becomes an indispensable and necessary part.

The Poet likewise addresses himself to the Gods very often in the

* Nunc agè qui Reges
Erato, quæ tempora, re-
rum, Quis Latio antiquo
fuerit Status, &c.

† Quis Deus, ô Musæ, tam
seva incendia Teucris A-
vertit, tantos ratibus quis
depulit ignes, Dicere
Prisca fides facti, sed famæ
perennis. *Æn.* 9.

‡ Dic, quibus Imperium
est animarum umbræque
silentes, Et Chaos & Phle-
geton, loca nocte silentia
latè: Sit mihi fas audita
loqui, sit numine vestro
Pandere res altæ terræ &
caligineertas. *Æn.* 6.

sequel of his Work: * Sometimes when he enters upon a new matter, as *Virgil* does, when in his Seventh Book he enters upon the second part of his design: † Sometimes when he relates some miraculous Action, that is above common probability; as in the transformation of *Aeneas's* Ships into Nymphs: ‡ Sometimes when he reveals those Mysteries, which God seems to have been willing to keep secret from the Curiosity of Men, such for instance is that which happens in the shades below, whither *Aeneas* is conducted by *Sibyl*: And lastly at other times upon other occasions.

But the Principal *Invocation* is that at the Beginning. And here we are to take notice of two things. The first is what the Poet desires: And the second, to what Deity he makes his Application.

That which we demand in the first Question, is whether the Poet should desire that all his Matter should be inspir'd into him, or only a part of it. The different practice of our Authors obliges us to make this Reflection.

Homer has so well connected his *Proposition* in the *Iliad* with the *Invocation*, that he implores his *Muse* for all that he proposes without exception.

In the *Odyssæis* he has begun after the same way; but after mentioning several things which he begs his *Muse* to assist him in, he at last retrenches some; and only intreats her to tell him a part of them.

Virgil follows this last method. That which is particular in him is, that he does not in the general desire one part of his Subject, but precisely determines what part he would have his *Muse* inspire into him.

him. 'Tis that which was the most secret and hardest to know. After he had very exactly proposed all his Matter, he then addresses himself to his *Muse*, and prays her to inform him of the Causes of all.

There is a very natural reason to be given for this Conduct: For since the Poet supposes that his Action is true, and writes as if he would have it pass for such; he must likewise suppose that such an Illustrious and Important Action could not have been buried in Oblivion. By this means *History* or *Report* might have informed him of one Part. This is the Idea he would have the Readers conceive, when he does not desire the *Muses* for all.

Perhaps likewise our Poets did this to divide the business so, that they might have the Honour of singing a part with the Gods. This is what * *Virgil* does in his eighth *Eclogue*: He sings the one half of his Matter; and prays the *Muses* to go on and sing the other part, because he could not do all.

* Hæc Damon: vos, quæ responderit Alphesibœus, Dicite Pierides: Non omnia possumus omnes.

However the case stands, we see by this Practice what the Poet is allowed to do. Thus much for what he desires; now let us see to whom he makes his Addresses.

The *Invocation* is proper to the Poem, when 'tis either addressed to the God, who presides over the Subject he treats on; or to the God, who presides over Poetry in general.

Ovid in his * *Metamorphoses* makes use of the first sort of *Invocation*. He names no God in particular, but addresses himself to all who had contributed to the Miraculous Transformations he was about to describe.

* In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas Corpora. Di corporis (nam vos mutastis & illas) Aspirate meis.

The Poet † *Lucretius* does the same in his Poem concerning the Nature of things. He calls upon *Venus*, because she presides o'er the Productions of Nature.

† Quæ quoniam rerum Naturam sola gubernas, Te sociam studeo scribundis versibus esse, Quos

ego de rerum naturâ pandere conor.

This is likewise what *Virgil* has done in his *Georgicks*. He names in particular all the Gods who were concern'd with *Husbandry*, and as if he had been afraid of omitting any one * he calls upon them all in General.

* Diique, Deaque omnes Studium quibus arva tueri.

But both he and *Homer* have left us another kind of an Example in their *Epick Poems*. They have call'd upon the *Muses*, and so they have distinguished the Deities which preside over Poësie, from those that preside over the Actions of the Poems, and are the Personages that act in them.

Besides, we are not to imagine that these Divinities, which they invoc'd, were look'd upon by the Poets themselves, as Divine Persons,

sons, from whom they expected any real Assistance. Under this Name of *Muse*, they wish'd for that Genius of *Poesy*, and all those Qualifications and Circumstances, that were necessary for executing their design. This is nothing else but an Allegorical and Poetical way of expression: As when they say, *the God of Sleep, the Goddess of Fame*, and the like. There are likewise *Muses* of all Ages, Countries, and Religions. There are *Christian* as well as *Pagan Muses*. There are *Greek, Latin, French, and English Muses*. There are New ones too, which begin every day to appear in behalf of those who disdaining the thread-bare Antiquities, are so bold as to invent things wholly new.

* Sicelides Musæ, paulo
majora canamus. Vir. Ecl.
6. Extremum hunc, Arc-
thusa, mihi concede labo-
rem. Ecl. 10.

† Avia Picridum peragro
loca, nullius ante Trita
sola: juvat integros ac-
cedere fontes, Atque hau-
rire, juvatque novos de-
cepere flores, Insignemq;
meo capiti petere inde co-
ronam, Unde prius nulli
velarint tempora Musæ.
Lucr. l. 3.

But the Doctrine of this Author leaves no room to doubt what sort of Gods they were, that he invoc'd. At the very beginning of this Poem, when he had address'd himself to *Venus*, as a Goddess who

* Omnis enim per se Di-
vum natura necesse est,
Immortali ævo summa cum
pace fruatur. Semota ab
nostris rebus sejunctaque
longè, &c.

‡ Tantum Religio potuit
suadere malorum.

managed the whole concern of Natural things, about which he was going to treat: He presently informs us, * *that the Gods never concerned themselves with what was done below*. This is the main Principle of his whole Treatise: and ‡ *Religion*, in his account, is an Error that imposes upon us.

What then are these *Muses*, and this *Venus* to which he address'd himself? Has he invoc'd the Deities to inspire him with that, with which 'tis impossible they should inspire him? And did he intreat them to teach him, that 'tis an Error to pray to them, and a mistake to expect any thing from them? Other Poets are not so unreasonable, and

* Parcus Deorum cultor &
infrequens, Insanientis dum
sapientis Consulens erro,
nunc retrorsum Vela dare,
arque iterare cursus Cogor relictos.

* *Horace*, who for some time was of the same opinion, might well call this *Epicurean* Wisdom downright Folly.

Hor. lib. 1. Od. 34.

We will conclude this Chapter by a short recapitulation of all that has been observ'd about the *Invocation*; and from thence it may be said, That the *Invocation* may be mixed with the *Proposition*, or may be separated from it: That it is always a necessary part of the *Epick Poem*: And that 'tis a prayer address'd to the Allegorical Genius of Poesy, under the name of *Muse*, or some one else, by whom the Poet begs to be inspir'd, either in the whole, or only in a part of that which he has undertaken to relate.

C H A P. V.

Of the Body of the Poem, or the Narration properly so called.

ALL the parts of the *Epick Poem*, which we have already discours'd of, are nothing but Introductions into it. Let us now enquire into the Body of the Poem, and into that which is properly called the *Narration*. And in short this *Narration* is the Recital which the Poet makes of his entire Action, *Episodi'd* with all its Circumstances and all its Decorations. 'Tis in this part we are to look for the *Beginning*, the *Middle*, and the *End* of the Action: This is it which informs us of the Causes of all we read: In this are propos'd, in this are unravelled all the Plots and Intrigues: In this the Personages, whether Divine or Humane, ought to demonstrate their Interests, their Manners, and their Quality, by their Actions and Discourses: And all this must be described with the Beauty, the Majesty, and the Force of Verse, of Stile, of Thoughts, of Similes, and of other Ornaments, that are suitable to the Subject in general, and to each single thing in particular.

We have spoken already to some of these things, and shall say something more about them in the remaining parts of this Treatise. But in this we shall consider, First, the Qualifications of the *Narration*: Secondly, the Order our Poets have observ'd therein: And Thirdly, its *Duration*; that is, how long time they have assign'd to the Adventures which they themselves have related in each of their Poems. For we have already observ'd how much time they assign'd to the Entire Actions.

We will begin with the Qualifications of the *Narration*. It must be *Pleasant*, *Probable*, *Moving*, *Marvellous*, and *Active*. We prov'd the necessity of these Properties, when we treated of the *Fable*, and of the Nature of the *Epopée*, from whence we took them. So that without insisting any longer upon these proofs, we shall in this place

place only consider, wherein these Qualifications do consist, and what we are persuaded *Homer* and *Virgil* have done to establish them in the Poem.

* *Aus prodesse volunt, aut delectare Poetas, Aut simul & jucunda, & idonea dicere vitae. . . Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci Lectorem delectando pariterque monendo. Hor. Poet.*

* *Horace* speaks of the *Profitable* and the *Pleasant* in such a manner, that he seems to treat of them both alike. But we fancy, if that had been his design, he had more regard to Poësie in general, than to the *Epick Poem* in particular. With respect to the last we say, that the *Profitable* is a Property Essential to the *Epick Narration*, whereas the *Pleasant* is only a Mode or Qualification of it. For it must be granted, that the Fable, which is the very Soul of the *Epopée*, was only invented to instruct Men: That the *Profitable* is not made use of to please People; but that on the other hand the *Pleasant* is inserted to procure a more favourable reception of the Instructions which the Fable contains.

So that the *Profitable* belongs not to any particular part of the Poem, but to the very Nature of the *Epopée*, and of the Fable in general. I am satisfied then with what I said about it in the first Book, where I think it was more proper to speak of it, than to joyn it with the *Pleasant* here. Besides, it being Essential, as I have already said, it will be met with in a great many Passages, since all suppose it.

C H A P. VI.

How the Narration is Pleasant.

PLeasantry in the *Epick Narration* is a necessary Qualification, which engages us to read the Poem with some sort of Delight, tho' excited by the most Terrible, the most Violent, and the most afflicting Passions. The Effect may arise, either from the Poem alone; or from that Relation which the Poet makes between his Auditors and his Personages, and the Interest which he makes the first to have in the Action he relates. *Statius* rob'd himself of this Advantage, when not regarding the *Romans* for whom he wrote, he must needs hunt for his Subjects in Countries and States, whose Manners and Customs bore no relation to those of his Readers, and wherein they had not the least Interest. *Homer* has made a better choice, and has better disposed of his Actions. And if *Virgil* has not been more careful than *Homer*, yet at least he has had

had infinitely more luck than him. But we said enough of this in the first Book.

The *Pleasantries* which the Poem affords in its own nature independently from the Auditors, are of three sorts. The first arise from the Beauty of the Verse, of the Style, and of the Thoughts: Others depend upon the Persons that are introduced into the Poem, upon their Manners, their Passions, and their Interests rightly manag'd: And the third sort consist in the things which are describ'd, and in the way of proposing them.

We shall speak of the first sort in our last Book, wherein we shall treat of the *Thoughts*, and *Expressions*. In this Book, we shall allow a whole Chapter to the *Passions*, and all the next Book will be about the *Manners*. As for the rest let us consider them here.

It is not necessary that all the persons introduc'd into a Poem should have divided and partiular *Interests* therein: Not only their great Number exempts them from it, but likewise a multitude of *Interests* would too much annoy and subvert the Pleasure we are discoursing of. It confounds the Hearer's mind, it over charges his Memory; and makes him less capable of those Motions which we would have him affected. The greater variety of things we have to take notice of and remember, the more sedate and attentive ought we to be, for fear of losing any necessary thing; and when any such thing escapes us, we take but little pleasure in hearing that, which we have no farther understanding of.

But there must be care likewise taken, that no Action or Adventure of any length be describ'd without interested persons. The Recital, which *Achemenides* makes of that which happened to *Ulysses* in *Polypheme's* Den, takes up no more than forty Verses. This wretched *Græcian* had a great Interest therein; but since he is but a very inconsiderable Personage in this Poem, *Virgil* provides that *Aeneas* should not be at a Distance from the Borders of the *Cyclops*, where he might in safety hear this Adventure: But all this is told in the Port, and upon the very Coast, where the *Trojans* were in danger of suffering the same Fate with the Companions of *Ulysses*. So that *Achemenides* speaks as well in their behalf as his own; and in conclusion says, * that they should not so much as stay to weigh Anchor, but cut the Cables that detained them. † *Aeneas* for his part owns himself obliged to him. Without these Engagements, these Adventures are languishing, and make those that hear them languish too.

* *Aeneid* l. 3.

* Sed fugite, & miserè.
fugite, atque ab litore
supremum Rumpite.

† *Supplite sic merito.*

But

But the Readers are very desirous to know what any person shall say or do in an Adventure wherein he has some Interest. This is more apparent in the Theatre, from whence the want of Interest has excluded the Narrations of the Chorus, and of such Actions as were only to tell what passed behind the Scenes. After Oedipus was come to the knowledge of his Parents and his Crimes, the Spectators were not very eager to know what the thoughts of the old Corinthian, and the Theban Phorbas are, nor do they take any delight in hearing them. But they cannot hear Oedipus and Jocasta without application and attention.

As much might be said concerning the Manners and the Passions, which are the second sort of Pleasantries. There is nothing more cold and disgustful than to see Personages of no Character. Good Painters give this to all their Draughts; and represent them either Passionate, or Attentive upon some thing or other. Such as are most lively, and have most of the Character upon them, are the most delightful to the Eye, and get most credit to their Masters.

* Ut Pictura Poësis erit.

* 'Tis just, with Poetry is with Painting.

The third sort comprehends the Pleasantries which the things themselves furnish us with. There are some things that in their own Nature are Pleasant, namely such as are Important and Memorable, as Wars, and other great Adventures, provided they are not collected without Choice and Judgment, nor carried on to an extreme, but judicious and well managed.

* Sumite materiam vestris,
qui scribitis, æquum Virtus,
& versate diu, quid
ferre recusent, Quid valeant
humeri. Cui lecta
potenter erit res, Nec facundia
deseret hunc nec lucidus ordo.
Et quæ Desperet tractata nite scere
posse Relinquet. Hor. Poet.

Others there are that are cold and insipid; and great skill must be used to manage them with success. The best way in such cases is to follow * Horace's Rule; to examine those Incidents, and ones own Strength; and to study them, and know himself so well, as to undertake nothing but what is proportionate to his Genius and Strength. If an Author distrusts himself in any thing, 'tis best letting it alone.

Dogmatical things are generally dry and insipid. Of this nature is the Doctrine of Plato, and the Pythagoreans, which Virgil has touch'd upon in his sixth Book with so much success. 'Twas necessary that this great Poet, should give us Instances of all sorts of perfections. Upon this account we might say, what Aristotle upon another Occasion says of Homer, that had an ordinary Poet nam'd this Subject, he would have been insufferable. The Art which I discover in him is what follows.

First of all, he makes this Doctrine necessary for the better conceiving of the Wonders which follow. Besides, he goes farther, for he makes it a necessary part of his Fable, and his Subject; first

is the Foundation of the Religion, the Laws, and the Morality, which *Aeneas* went to establish in *Italy* under the Character of a *Purifier* and a *Legislator*. In the third place, before ever he proposes it to the Readers, he puts them upon desiring it as much as *Aeneas* did; for without doubt they are mov'd with the same Curiosity, which the Poet bestows so naturally on his Hero: They see with the same Amusement, that he does, persons that were to be born some Ages after: And what this Hero asks *Achilles*, that they ask *Virgil*. [* Is it possible, that there should be any Souls here so fond of returning again upon the Earth, and of being imprisoned once more in a body?] And 'tis with delight that they hear the † Poet in the person of *Achilles* promise to satisfy their Curiosity in that point. The Author does not dogmatize at all himself: But he brings it about, that it should be discuss'd of by two persons of the greatest importance in his Poem, and who were both very highly interested therein. Lastly, he is very short upon this Subject: He does not so much as spend thirty Verses about it.

The most useful and proper way for Poets, is to lay down these pieces of Doctrine disguised under the Allegories of some Action or other. *Homer* does this often in some Physical points: The Age *Virgil* lived in obliged him to be more reserv'd therein; by which means he has more examples of lessons in *Morality*. We have said something already about this in the first Book: And shall say more of it in the Book about *Machines* and the *Gods*: And likewise in this Book, when we come to shew, how the *Epick Narration* ought to be *Active*.

The meeting of Councils may be reckoned among those things which make the *Narration* languish, and render it unpleasant. Quietness, Moderation, and arguing of Debates ought naturally to preside there, and all this is opposite to the Motions, and the Action, which ought to appear throughout the whole *Epick Poem*.

Our Poets have carefully avoided all manner of sage and serious Debates, where each person speaks in his turn, and delivers his sober thoughts. They generally brought in some hasty or passionate persons, such as are *Achilles*, and *Agamemnon* in the first Book of the *Iliad*, and almost all the other *Greeks* and *Trojans* of this Fable. Such likewise in the *Aeneid* are *Venus* and *Juno* in the tenth Book, and *Drances* and *Turnus* in the Eleventh. The Council in the ninth Book is altogether as Passionate, but the Movements are of another kind. There are neither Quarrels, nor Heats. All the Personages therein are generous and manly: And yet of

* O Pater, ante aliquot
ad coelum hinc ire pu-
tandum est Sublimis ani-
mas, iterumque ad tarda
reverti Corpora?

† Dicam equidem, nec re-
suspensum, nate, tenebo.
Æn. 6.

above threescore Verses which the Poet spends about it, there are scarce five calm ones. *Nisus* and young *Euryalus*, that are introduced therein, make the rest so passionate, that this Passage is not one of the least tender and moving Beauties, which the *Aeneid* has of this kind.

If these Assemblies are without passions, there should be little said in them, and no body contradicting what is propos'd, these Incidents are not so much Debates, as simple Proposals of what is going to be done. There should likewise such proper Places be chosen for them in the Poem, where they might not interrupt the Series of the Action. Of this Nature are the two Assemblies of the Gods in the first and fifth Books of the *Odysses*. The first is at the Beginning of the Poem, where it interrupts nothing: And the second does not last long, and is only a simple Transition from the Recital of the Transactions at *Ithaca* during the Absence of *Ulysses*, to the Recital of that which more particularly regards the Person of this Hero.

The Reader is offended likewise, when that is related to him which he knows already. This was not so great a fault in *Homer's* time. *Virgil* is more exact herein. *Venus* in the first book, would not make a Recital of her Misfortunes to *Aeneas*, she interrupts it to comfort him. And in the third Book, when good Manners oblig'd this Hero to relate his story to *Andromache*, *Helenus* comes in very opportunely, and so hinders him from going on with his Discourse.

C H A P. VII.

Of Probability.

Truth and Probability may meet together, since a thing, that is true, may appear such. This is what's common. But sometimes Truth it self is only Probability, as in Miraculous, Prodigious, and extraordinary Actions. Sometimes likewise there is Probability without Truth, as in the ordinary Fictions of the Poets. In a word, an Action may be either only True, or only Probable, or else without Truth and Probability, or lastly, it may have both these Qualifications. These four sorts of Actions or things have been as it were divided among four sorts of Learning. *History* has got the first, relying only on that which is true independently from

from *Probability*, which may, or may not be in it. Such is the Action of the *Maid of Orleans*. The *Epick* and *Dramatick* Fables are opposite to History, in that they prefer a *Probable* Falsity before an *Improbable* Truth. Such an Action as *Samson's* would be less proper for the Subject of an *Epick Poem*, than the Death of *Dido* who made away with her self, when *Aeneas* left her. *Aesop* is alike negligent of Truth and *Probability* in the Discourses he attributes to the Beasts. Lastly, *Moral Philosophy* should not only mind the Truth of the things it teaches, but 'tis likewise necessary that this Truth appear such, and convince those, we are willing to convince, that it is profitable.

But to what we have said concerning the *Epopea*, we may add that naturally it makes use of both *Truth* and *Probability*, as *Morality* does; and that in its Expressions and its Dress, it assumes a liberty very like that of *Aesop*. It is *Probable* that *Aeneas*, when going for *Italy*, endur'd a dreadful storm, which cast him upon the Coasts of *Africk*, where he escaped. 'Tis a *Moral Truth*, that God proves, and sometimes seems to abandon good men, and that at last he rescues them from the Dangers, into which he had permitted them to fall: This is not only *True*, but likewise *Probable*. But the Discourse that passed between *Juno* and *Aeolus*, and what *Neptune* said to *Boreas* and *Zephyrus*, have as little *Truth* and *Probability* in them, as the Intercourse that passed between the *Country* and the *City-Mouse*.

So much may be said in the general. To be more particular, and to speak more exactly and Methodically concerning the *Probability* of *Epick Narrations*, we shall reduce it to several Heads, and consider it according to *Divinity*, according to *Morality*, according to *Nature*, according to *Reason*, according to *Experience*, and according to *vulgar Opinion*.

It may be said, that there is nothing with respect to *Divinity*, but what is *Probable*; because with God nothing is impossible. This is a Means the Poets often make use of to render every thing *Probable*, which they have a mind to feign contrary to the Ordinary Course of Nature. This is an ample Subject, and requires a particular Treatise: Which we shall bestow upon it, when we come to treat of the *Machines*.

We have already observ'd that *Morality* requires both *Truth* and *Probability*, and the first is more necessary than the last. A Poet was formerly condemned and fined for a Default in this upon the Theatre: For he made a Personage, whom he had represented as an honest Man, to say, that when his tongue swore, his Mind did not. Certainly 'tis neither *True* nor *Probable* that an honest Man should ever trick another by a false Oath, and call God to witness those Promises he never intends to keep.

Seneca the Philosopher accuses *Virgil* of a fault against *Natural Truth and Probability*, when he says that the Winds were pent up in Grotts: Because Wind being nothing else but Air, or Vapours in Motion, it destroys its Nature to suppose it in a Profound Repose. *Vossius* answers this, and says, that the Poet has very well described the Natural production of Winds, which arise from Hills by the Vapours and Exhalations, that are inclosed therein; and that 'tis concerning the Causes of Winds which he speaks, by a figure very common among Poets and Orators, taking the Cause for the Effect. 'Tis as if we should say, that the Winds are inclosed in Eolipiles full of Water, since when these Vessels are warm, the Water comes out of them in puffs of Wind. It would have been likewise a Fault against *Natural Probability* to have said that *Aeneas* met with Stags in *Africk*, if 'tis true that they could not live there. But these are Venial Slips, because, *Aristotle* says, they make not against the Poet's Art, but arise from his ignorance in some things that he has learn'd from other Arts. Yet care must be taken that they be not too gross and visible. There are some *Probabilities* of this kind from which *Aeschylus* himself would not be excus'd. We should never pardon him if he had represented the *Lion* Timorous, the *Hare* Daring, the *Fox* Dull, and the like.

The *Probability* with respect to *Reason* is usually destroyed by those, who only strive to make things look Great. They transgress the Bounds which good sense prescribes.

* Et dum vitat humum,
nubes & inania capat.
Mr. Pate.

They think 'tis creeping unless they soar above the Clouds: And * little dream that when they quit the Earth, they part with what is solid to embrace an Airy Fantom. *Statius* is very often guilty of this Fault. Who would believe, for Instance, that a single Man surprized in an Ambuscado by fifty Bravo's, that lay in wait for him, could kill nine and forty of them, and give Quarter to the last? Who would believe that this same Romantick Hero would fight at fifty cuffs with a Young Prince for the Wall? And yet they wore Swords by their sides, even when they were

* Forte & nudassent enses,
sic ira ferebat. *Tib. l.*
2.

pulling of hair, and scratching Faces with their Nails. The * Poet himself observes as much, and says their Anger rose so high, that perhaps they had drawn upon one another, if King *Adrastus* had not step'd in between. Here is a strange Illustration of the rage of two Kings. The third person finds it so reasonable, † that he discovers by this noble exploit the greatness of their Extraction. Is this at all *Probable*? And is not a Man's Reason strangely

shock'd at this?

Sometimes

Sometimes the Poets are found fault with for relating things contrary to Experience. * Scaliger blames

Homer for saying that Jupiter Thundered and Snowed at the same time: Which is a thing, says this Critick, which we never observed. But this does not contradict

* Eriam decimo Iliados Jovem fulgurare facis, ubi ningit. Nunquam hoc Vidimus. Scaliger. Post. Book 5.

Experience; not many years ago it was observable, that in January the Thunder was so Violent, that it burnt down the Steeple of a Church at Chalons, and did as much at the Abby of Chally near Sens, and in several other places. Terrible Claps of Thunder were heard, and several Thunderbolts fell at Sens in a very deep and thick Snow. Homer then might likewise have seen the self same thing.

But the principal sort of Probability, and that which we nam'd last, is the Probability according to the common-received Opinion; which is of no small moment in this place. A thing is Probable when it seems to be True. But sometimes it seems True to Men of Sense, and False to the Vulgar; or the Contrary. Since the Vulgar and the Learned are thus divided, it may be asked: which side the Poet ought to take. The Subject shall be, for instance, the Adventure of Dido, or that of Penelope, or the Story of Medea, Helen, or the like. That which Homer and Virgil have wrote about it shall be Probable to the Vulgar: But Men of Learning shall have read the contrary in History. Some Authors shall have written that Dido was Chast, and Medea Innocent, that Penelope was banished and divorc'd by Ulysses for having abused his Absence, and that Helen was never at Troy.

'Tis no hard matter to decide this Point by the Rules I have laid down. Homer, Virgil, and the rest have made no scruple to disregard History, that so their Fables might be more just. * Horace does not refer

* Rectius Illicum carmen deducis in actus. Aut Parnam sequere, aut sibi convenientia fingere. Hor. Post.

Poets to the Truth of History, but either to Fables already invented as that of the Hind, or else to vulgar Opinions and Fame. Aristotle says nothing against, but rather

seems to confirm this Doctrine, when he tells us, that a Poet does not write as an Historian, what sort of Man Alcibiades was, what he said, or what he did, upon such or such an Occasion; but only what in all probability he ought to have said or done. He approves of the Fable of Oedipus upon the Theatre, and yet, he says, that that which serves as a Ground-work to all this Action has nothing of reason in it: And that King Oedipus could not have tarried so many years, before he made inquiry into the Murder of his Predecessour King Laius. He only excuses the Negligence that is attributed to Oedipus, upon the account that this Fault against Reason was foreign to the Tragedy. But this excuse being only designed

to justify the Conduct of the Poet, it expressly supposes that this Action was invented contrary to the Truth of History: And besides it shews that *Aristotle* allows of this, when he goes about to prove that this Falsity hinders not but the Subject may be Lawful and Regular.

He likewise approves of the *Iphigenia in Taurica*, and thinks it worth his while to make the Platform of it, as he did that of the *Odysseis*. And yet it does not appear that this Philosopher nor the Learned Men of his times were perswaded of a thing whose Falsity quite ruins this Action. Certainly they never thought, that in the very moment *Iphigenia* was going to be sacrificed to *Diana in Aulis*, this Goddess conveyed her away, and substituted a Hind in her stead. *Aristotle* was therefore of the Opinion, that a Poet, when his Fable so required, was not so strictly tyed up to the Truths of History, to suit himself to the Capacity of the Learned, as he was to that which might pass for *Probable* in the Eye of the Vulgar.

After all, it may be said, that not only ev'ry individual person finds his story, and meets with his satisfaction in this Practice: But likewise Men of Learning see more solid Truths therein, than any the Vulgar can meet with; and more certain than those of History which the Poet disregards. The more learned they are, the less will they expect these Historical Truths in a Poem, which is not designed for that, but for things more Mysterious. The Truths, they look for there, are Moral and Allegorical Truths. The *Aeneid* was never writ to tell us the Story of *Dido*, but to inform us under this Name of the Spirit and Conduct of that State which she founded, and of the Original and Consequences of its differences with *Rome*. A Man takes some delight in seeing this; and these Truths are more pleasant, more apparent, and better understood, than those which the Poet might have taken out of an History that was so little known in his time, and about which the Learned Men of our days, after so many searches, do still contend.

Beside these sorts of *Probabilities*, there is still another particular one; which we may call an *Accidental Probability*. It consists, not in making use of several Incidents, each of which in particular is *Probable*, but in ordering them so, that they shall happen all together very *Probably*. A Man, for instance, may *Probably* die of an Apoplexy, but that this should happen exactly when the Poet has occasion to unravel his Plot, is not so easily granted.

The faults against this *Probability* are of a large Extent: For they comprehend the Multitude of Marvellous things, each of which might have been regular in the particular; but which in all *Probability* cannot be heaped up in so great a Number and so small a space. 'Tis likewise a fault against this *Probability*, when an Incident not duly prepared (tho it needs it) is brought in all on a sudden,

sudden. A desire of surprizing the Auditors by the sight of some Beauty which they never expected, casts Poets of little Judgment into these Errors; but the effect thereof is of very ill Consequence. When a Man sets himself to seek for the Causes of these events in what he has already seen, this Application of thought takes away all the pleasure. It would vex a Man to take too much pains to find out these Causes, but much more if he could not find them out at all. And when at last the Poet does discover them, the Passion is weaken'd or destroy'd by these misplaced Instructions.

The *Comedians* make use of these surprizes more frequently, and can reap some Advantage from them. But the gravity of the *Epopée* will not away with these petty Amusements. All there ought to be manag'd after a Natural way, so that the Incidents thereof must be duly prepar'd, or else be such as need no Preparation.

Virgil is exact in this. *Juno* prepares the Tempest which she raises in the first Book: *Venus* in the same Book prepares the Amours of the Fourth. The Death of *Dido*, which happen'd at the End of this Fourth Book, is prepar'd from the very * first day of her Marriage. *Ille dies primus Lethi.* *Helenus* in the third Book prepares all the matter of the sixth. In the Sixth, *Sibyl* foretells all the ensuing Wars, the Out-rages of *Turnus*, the misfortunes which were to happen upon the Account of *Lavinia*, and likewise the Voyage of *Aeneas* with *Evander*. We should be too tedious, if we took notice of ev'ry thing of this Nature.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the Admirable, or the Marvellous.

Admiration is oppos'd to *Probability*. 'Tis the business of the last to reduce ev'ry thing into the most simple, and most natural order: Whereas on the other hand, we never admire any thing, but what appears extraordinary, and out of the common Road. This is that which deceives some, who, to make their Heroes admir'd, raise them to what is impossible. This Practice meets with a quite contrary effect; for if we would have a thing admired, we should make it so *Probable*, that it may be conceiv'd and credited: We never Admire that, which we think has actually

ally never been; and all extravagant Flights put us upon this Thought.

And yet for ought I know, I may yield too much to Reason and Probability contrary to Aristotle's mind, who prefers the Admirable by far before them. Let us see what he says about it, and let the

* Δοίμῳ δὲ ἐν τῷ κ Τρα-
γῳδίαισι ποιεῖν τὸ θαυ-
μαστόν. Μᾶλλον δ' ἐνδ-
χόν ἐστι τῇ ἑρμηνείᾳ τὸ
ἀνάλωτον. Διὸ συμβαίνει
μάλιστα τὸ θαυμαστόν, δια-
τὸ μὴ ὁρᾶν οἷς τὸ ἀσυνήθιστον.
Ἐπειτα τὰ πρῶτα τοῦ
ἑκτοῦ διακρίνειν ὁμοίως
ἐστὶν γὰρ οἷον ὁ ἑρμῆς ὁ μὴ
ὁρᾷται ἢ ὁ δῶλοντες, ὁ δὲ
ἀναισθητός. Ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἑπ-
τά λαμβάνει. Poet. c. 24.

World agree to it, as they see cause. * 'Tis
requisite, says he, That the Marvellous
should be in Tragedy, but much more in
the Epopea, which in this goes beyond the
bounds of Reason: For since they do not
see the Persons all, as they do upon the
Stage, that which transgresses the bounds of
Reason is very proper to produce the Mar-
vellous. That which Homer says of Hector
pursued by Achilles, would have been very
ridiculous upon the Stage, where one should

have seen so many persons in a fight, looking on Hector as he was
flying without pursuing him, and only one person following, giving
a signal to the rest so stand off. But this is not discernable in
the Epopea. Aristotle says further, * " that

* τὸ δὲ θαυμαστόν, ἡ δὲ
ἡμῶν δὲ. Ἡμεῖς γὰρ
προσθέμεν ἐκπληκτικὰ
καὶ χαριζόμενα. Διὸ μὴ
δὲ μάλιστα Ὁμήρου ἢ
τῶν ἄλλων φανερὸν λέγειν
ὡς δέ. Poet. Ibid.

" these Additions, that are made to Reason
" and Truth for the raising of Admiration,
" are likewise Pleasant; and that 'tis evi-
" dent how natural this is by the ordinary
" practice of most People, who to make
" their story the more diverting, add some-
" thing or another of their own Invention :

" But that Homer out-does all Men in teaching us how to tell
" these sorts of yes with a bon grace.

These Fictions of Homer are, amongst other things, such as
Horace commends in the *Odyssæis*, and which he finds to be equally
beautiful and surprising, joyning together these two Qualifications,
the Pleasant and the Marvellous, after the same manner that we
have observed Aristotle did.

But tho' this Philosopher might have said thus much, certainly he
never design'd to allow Men a full license of carrying things beyond
Probability and Reason. Besides, without doing him the least in-
justice, and without abating any thing of his due Authority, it
may be questioned whether the Example of Homer, which he pro-
poses, would have been exact enough for Virgil's Imitation. For
the custom of speaking by Fables and Allegories, even in Prose,
and before the People, was not in vogue at Rome in the Latin
Poet's time. So that beside the Allegorical sense, he was farther
obliged to insert some other, which one might understand simply
without any more ado.

Lastly, that which I infer from the Doctrine of *Aristotle* is that he prescribes the *Marvellous* and the *Probable* to both the *Epick* and the *Dramatick* Poets: But in such a manner, that the *Dramatick* have a greater regard to the *Probable* than the *Marvellous*; and that the *Epick* on the contrary prefer the *Admirable*. The reason of this difference is, that we see what is done in Tragedy; and only hear by Recitals the Adventures of the *Epopéa*. 'Tis upon this consideration that *Horace* orders, * that in Tragedies themselves the two surprising Incidents (such as the Transformation of *Progne* into a Bird, or of *Cadmus* into a Serpent) should be kept from the Spectator's view. There needs only simple Narrations to be made of these things. 'Tis likewise for this reason that the *Epopéa* has the privilege of *Machines*, which are as so many Miracles and exceed natural *Probability*. But they are not after the same manner allow'd upon the Theatre.

* Multaque tolles Ex oculis, quæ mox narret fœcundia præfens. Aut in avem Progne, Cadmus mutetur in anguem. Quodcumque offendis mihi sit incredulus odis. *Pæ.*

We add further, that if for the better pleasing the Auditors by a surprising Incident, one should transgress the boundaries of Reason and Truth, their minds ought to be disposed thereto, by something that may set them so far besides themselves, that they be not in a condition to perceive that they are impos'd upon; or at least that they may thank the Poet for having surpris'd them so pleasantly. This is what Monsieur *Corneille* has observ'd in his *Cid*. He knew well enough that he could not bring *Rodriguez* into the Earl's House, whom he had but just then Murder'd, without transgressing against Reason and Probability: But then he knew as well that the curiosity of the Spectators, and the Attention they gave to what pass'd between this Young Hero and *Chimene*, would not suffer them to take notice of this fault: And that tho' they should have been inform'd of it, they would have taken it ill, if a more strict Regularity had rob'd them of so great a satisfaction.

I believe that the best Rules for knowing how far 'tis allowable to carry on the *Marvellous*, and for discerning what will be taking, what will offend, and what will be Ridiculous; is first, a sound judgment; and then the reading of good Authors, and likewise the Examples of those who have come off but poorly; and lastly the comparing these two together. But in this Examen of things a Man must be well acquainted with the Geniuses, the Customs, and the Manners of the several Ages. For that which is a Beauty in *Homer*, might have met with sorry Entertainment in the Works of a Poet in the days of *Augustus*.

'Tis not enough (to make an Incident admir'd) that it should have something that is *Admirable*: But beside that, 'tis requisite there should be nothing in it that might put a stop to its effect, and

and destroy the *Admiration*; such as would be all contrary Passions: *Admiration* in this point has nothing but what is common to it self and all the other Passions. Therefore for the better explaining of this matter we must join that with them.

CHAP. IX.

Of the Passions.

* Non satis est pulchra
esse Poemata, dulcia sunt.
Et quocumque volent ani-
mam Auditoris agunto.
Hr. Poet.

† Ille per extensum funem
mihi posse videtur Ire
Poeta, meum qui pectus in-
aniter angit, Irritat, mul-
cet, falsis terroribus implet
Ut magna. L. 1. Ep. 1.

THE *Epick Narration* ought to be *Admirable*, * but this Beauty is not enough. It is farther necessary, that it be moving and *Passionate*, that it transport the Mind of the Reader, fill him with Inquietude, give some pleasure, cast him into a Consternation, and make him sensible of the Violence of all these Motions, even in Subjects, which he himself knows are feign'd and invented at pleasure. † *Horace*, who prescribes all this to the Poets, can't forbear admiring them, when they come off well, and he compares their skill to the Power of Magick.

The *Passions* then are necessary to great Poems: But all are not equally necessary or convenient to all Poems. Mirth and Pleasant surprizes belong to *Comedy*. On the contrary, Horreur and Compassion belong to *Tragedy*. The *Epick Poem* keeps as it were in the middle between both, and seizes upon all these Passions, as is evident from the Grief that reigns in the fourth Book of the *Aeneid*, and from the Sports and Diversions of the Eighth. The Passion that seems most peculiar to this kind of Poem is *Admiration*. It is the least contrary to the Passions of the two other kinds of Poems. We admire with Joy things that surprise us pleasingly, and we admire with Terreur and Grief such things as terrifie and make us sad.

Beside this *Admiration* which in general distinguishes the *Epick Poem* from the *Dramatick*, each *Epick Poem* has likewise some peculiar passion, which distinguishes it in particular from other *Epick Poems*, and constitutes a kind of singular and individual difference between these Poems of the same Species. These singular Passions correspond to the Character of the Hero. Anger and Terreur reign

* Ης ἐν Πηλεΐδῃ, τῷ μὲν
καταρλέποντι ἀνδρῶν. II.
† Ηὐδὲ γὰρ οἱ ποῖός τ' ἐστιν

throughout the *Iliad*, because * *Achilles* is Angry and the most Terrible of all Men. The *Aeneid* has all soft and tender Passions, because that is the Character of *Aeneas*. The Prudence,

Prudence, Wisdom, and Constancy of *Ulysses* do not allow him in either of these Extremes, therefore the Poet does not permit one of them to be predominant in the *Odyssey*. He confines himself to *Admiration* only, which he carries to an higher pitch than in the *Iliad*: And 'tis upon this account that he introduces a great many more *Machines* of the *Odyssey* into the Body of the Action; than is to be seen in the Actions of the other two Poems. This Doctrine will find a fitter place in the next Book, where we shall treat concerning the *Manners* and the *Character*.

We have still two things to say concerning the *Passions*. The One is how to impress them upon the Auditors: And the Other how to make them sensible of them. The First is to prepare their minds for them: And the Second is, not to huddle together several *Passions* that are Incompatible.

The Necessity of preparing the Auditors is founded upon the Natural and General necessity of taking things where they are, when we would convey them elsewhere. 'Tis easie applying this Maxim to the Subject in hand. A Man is in a quiet and profound repose, and you have a mind by a discourse made on purpose to make him angry: You must begin your discourse by a mild way; by this means, you will Close him, and then going hand in hand together, as the saying is, he will not fail following you in all the Passions: You have a mind to excite in him by degrees. But if at the first touch you manifest your Anger, you will make your self as ridiculous, and meet with as little success as *Ajax* in *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, in whom the witty *Ovid* has given us a notable Instance of this Default. He makes him begin his plea by Anger and violent figures before his Judges who were profoundly calm. * The Generals were set, the Soldiers standing round about them, *Ajax* rises, and being of a furious and impatient Disposition casts a fierce look towards the Sea-shore, stretches out his hands towards the Fleet that rode there, and then cries out: Ob Heavens! This Cause must be tried in view of the Navy, and *Ulysses* my Competitor!

* Confedere Duces, & vulgi stante corona, surgit ad hos Clypei dominus septemplex *Ajax*. Utque erat impatiens ira, Stygia torvo Littora prospectu, classemque in litore vultu. Protendensque manus, Agimus, pro Juppiter, inquit, Ante rates causam, & mecum confertur *Ulysses*? &c. *Metam. Lib. 13.*

These necessary Preparations arise from the discourse that goes before these Movements, or else from some Action, that already begins to excite them before one speaks. The Orators themselves sometimes make use of this last way. For tho' they generally excite not the *Passions* till the end of their Harangues; yet when they find their Audience already mov'd, it would be ridiculous, if by an unseasonable Calmness they should begin by making them quit that, with which they would have them affected. The last time *Caesars* enter'd the Senate house, the Senators were so disturbed

stirred at his presence, that those who sat next him drew further off, and left him to sit alone. Then the Consul would have offended against Reason, if he had begun his Speech with that sedateness that is usual to *Exordium*. He would have abated that Indignation with which he was willing to affect the Senators against *Carthage*; and he would have taken away from the mind of this Parricide, that Dread and Terror he was minded to strike him with, and which he was already sensible of by this tacite condemnation of the Senate.

* Quousque tandem abutere, Carthago, patientia nostram, &c.

Therefore * omitting this first part of the Speech, which upon such an occasion would have been prejudicial to him, he takes his

Audience in the Condition he found them, and continues and heightens their Passions.

That which is so rare among the Orators, is common among the Poets: They abound with Instances of this nature, where one may see the Passion prepar'd and kept up by the Action. *Dido* begins a Speech as *Ovid's Ajax* did. *Ob Jupiter! What? Shall this Stranger go off so? &c.* But these Motions were very well prepar'd.

* Illa dolos dirumque nefas in pectore versat, Certa metui, &c. *Æn.* 4.

* *Dido* entertains thoughts of her Death before *Aeneas* left her. She spent her Night in nothing else but disquietude, and such distracting thoughts,

as these her fears possess'd her with.

* Regina è speculis ut primum albescere lucem, vidit, & æquatis classibus procedere vela, Littoraque, & venaesensit sine sentigie portus: Terque quaterque manu pectus percussa decorum, Flaventesque abscissa comas: Proh Jupiter! &c. *Æn.* 4. *ait*; & nostris illulcrit advena regnia! &c. *Ibid.*

* Soon as the Dawn began to clear the Sky,
Down to the Shore the sad Queen cast her
Eye;

Where when she doth the empty port survey,
And now the Fleet with mings display'd at
Sea,

Her hands held up, her Golden tresses torn,
Must we, says she, of force endure this scorn?
Can we not have recourse to arms? nor meet
This fraud with fraud? nor burn this
wicked Fleet?

Hast, fly, pursue, row, and let every hand
Snatch up with speed some swift revenging
brand.

[Englished by Edm. Waller and Sidney Godolphin Esquires.]

This is no surprize to the Hearers: They are so well prepared for it, that they would have wonder'd if the Beginning of this Speech had been less passionate.

The Practice of *Seneca* is quite contrary. If he has any Recital to make, which ought to imprint some great Passion or other; he takes

takes away from both his Personages and his Audience all the inclinations they might have towards it. If they are possess'd with the Sorrow, fear, and expectation of some dreadful thing: He will begin by some fine and elegant Description of some place or other, which only serves to shew the Copiousness, and the poignant, bloody Wit of a Poet without Judgment. In the *Tragedy*, *Hecuba* and *Andromache* were dispos'd to hear of the violent and barbarous death of their Son *Astyanax*, whom the *Greeks* had thrown from the top of an high Tower. It mightily concern'd them indeed to know, that among the croud that flock'd from all parts to that sad sight. * *Some* there were who stood upon the ruins of the old decay'd Buildings, whose legs trembled under them, because they were mounted a little too high, &c. People that have the patience to speak or hear such idle stuff, are so little inclin'd to weep, that they had need have notice, as the mercenary Mourners of old had, when 'tis time to set up their Whine.

* *Altra rupes cuius è coccine erecta fumosus turba libavit pedes, &c.*

The Second thing we think necessary for the well managing the *Passions*, and to make the Auditors sensible of them, is to insert them in the Poem pure and disengag'd from every thing, that may hinder them from producing their due Effect.

'Tis necessary then, to avoid the vicious Multiplicity of Fables, where there are too many Stories, too many Fables, too many Actions, the Adventures too much divided and hard to be remember'd, and such Intrigues as one can't easily comprehend. All this distracts the Mind, and requires so much attention, that there is nothing left for the *Passions* to work upon. The Soul should be free and disengag'd, to be the more sensible of them. We destroy our true sorrows, when we divert our thoughts another way: And how contrary will these troublesome Applications be to the Fictions and Movement of Poems? Of all the obstacles that destroy the *Passions*, the *Passions* themselves are not the least. They fight with and destroy one another: And if a Man should mix together a Subject of Joy and a Subject of Sorrow, he would make neither of them sink deep. * *Horace* informs us, that no Poetical License will allow of this sort of mixture.

* *Non ut placida coeant immitia.*

The very nature of these *Habits* impose this Law. The Blood and Animal Spirits cannot move so smoothly on in their usual way at quiet, if at the same time they are stop'd and retarded by some Violence, such as *Admiration* causes. Nor can they be in either of these two Motions, whilst *Fear* contracts them from the external parts of the Body to make them rally about the Heart: Or whilst *Anger* sends them into the Muscles, and makes them act there with a Violence so contrary to the operations of *Fear*.

A Poet then should be acquainted with both the Causes and the Effects of the Passions in our Souls. 'Tis there we are more sensible of them, and know them better than in the Blood and the Animal Spirits. This Knowledge, and the justness of his Genius will make him manage them with all the force, and the effects they are capable of. And here we will propose two Examples of that which we have said concerning the Simplicity and the Disengagement of each Passion.

The Admirable must needs be predominant in the Warlike Virtues of a Maid; and this is the Passion Virgil makes use of in the Episode of Camilla; And on the contrary he has made Pity to reign in that of Pallas. This passion agrees very well with this young Prince who is one of the Heroe's Party. But the Poet does not mix these two Passions together. He only shows in Pallas all that ordinary Courage that a young Man is capable of. He fights Turnus, but did not go out to attack him: He does not so much as wound him, nor put him in the least danger; he only attends his

* Aut spoliis ego jam rap-
tis laudabor opimis, Aut
letho insigni. *En. 10.*

coming, and * speaks to him more like one that fear'd not death, than one who expected to kill him. He is kill'd at the first blow; and there is nothing extraordinary in

it. But there is something more than ordinary in the Lamentation which Aeneas and the unhappy Evander made upon his Death.

Camilla on the contrary, made her self admir'd by a Valour becoming a Hero; but she dies without being pitied. That which Diana says upon the Subject, deserves not the name of a Lamentation in comparison to that which Aeneas and Evander made for Pallas. Besides, the Speech of Diana is said before her Death, and is not in a place where it might have any great effect. In short, Camilla is kill'd, she is reveng'd, and nothing more said about it. How many Poets are there, that would have bestow'd a Lover or two upon her, and endeavour'd to make an Episode as moving as that of Clorinda; and Tancred? This Beauty did not escape Virgil's view. * He says, that several

* Multa illum frustra Tyr-
rhena per oppida matres
Optaverunt nuptum. *En. 10.*

Italian Dames courted her for their Sons.

This Reflection shews us, that his thoughts were upon every thing, and that it was not without choice and judgment, that he omitted that which would have appear'd so beautiful to other Poets. But he was not willing to spoil the Unity of the Passion, nor put a stop to its effects.

CHAP.

C H A P. X.

How the Narration ought to be Active.

THE *Epick Narration* ought to be *Active*. This Qualification is so necessary to it, that *Aristotle's* Expression herein seems to confound the *Epopea* with the *Tragedy*. 'Tis by this he begins to lay down Rules for this first sort of Poem.

* 'Tis requisite, says he, that the *Epick Fables* be *Dramatick*, like those that are in *Tragedy*. Now that which makes *Tragedy* *Dramatick*, and upon the account of which it has the Name which signifies to

† *Act*, is, that the Poet never speaks in it; and that every thing is represented by the Personages that are introduc'd, and who alone *Act* and speak therein. From whence we learn, that since *Aristotle* requires this Qualification likewise in the *Epopea*, he thereby orders, that the Personages speak likewise in this kind of Poem.

Nor does he hereby exclude the Narration of the Poet. This can never be; since he himself says that the *Epopea* is an *Imitation* carried on by a Narration; and that in truth the Narration of the Poet is its *Form*, which distinguishes it the most Essentially from the Actions of the Theatre.

But he means, that these two things ought to be so mix'd, that the Personages speak very often.

* *Homer*, says he, who merits so much praise in other things, is especially to be admired for this, that he has been the only Poet, who knew what he ought to do. For the Poet should speak but little. The Poetical Imitation consists not so much in what the Poet says, as in what he makes his Personages say: The other Poets shew themselves from the Beginning to the very End of their Poems. They imitate but seldom,

and then they carry not on their Imitation very far. *Homer* uses a quite contrary method. After having said a very little himself, he presently introduces some one or other of his Personages. This is what *Aristotle* says, nor needs it any Comment. To this famous Example he has given us in *Homer* we might join that of the *Latin* Poet, who speaks less in his *Æneid*, than he makes his Personages speak.

* Πῶς δὲ δραματικῶς,
καὶ ἐν μίτῳ μίμνηται.
ὅτι δὲ τὸν μίτῳ καὶ
καὶ ἐν τῷ Τραγῳδίῳ
συμβαίνει δραματικῶς.
Poet. c. 23.

† Δράμα.

* Οὐμὸς δὲ ἄλλοι τε
πολλοὶ ἀέθουσαν
καὶ δὲ ἐν μίτῳ καὶ
καὶ ἐν τῷ Τραγῳδίῳ
συμβαίνει δραματικῶς.
ὅτι δὲ τὸν μίτῳ καὶ
καὶ ἐν τῷ Τραγῳδίῳ
συμβαίνει δραματικῶς.
c. 24.

But the last Words of *Aristotle* are capable of two Interpretations; the first is, * *Homer says but little himself, and presently introduces a Man or a Woman, or something else that has Manners; but without that Qualification he introduces nothing.* So that all the Words which follow the mention of a *Man* or a *Woman*, signify a *Deity*, or a feign'd person, which though in its own nature it has no Manners, yet has some in the Poem, in to which Allegorically one may bring all manner of things as well as into other *Fables*.

For this thought is taken from the Nature of *Fables* in general. When they are divided into different sorts; by the term *Morale*, that is by the *Manners* that are attributed to something that has none, we understand those, where for the Personages we introduce Beasts, Plants, and such like things, which in their own Nature have no Manners. Thus, for instance, in the Fable of the *Olive-Tree* and the *Reed*, the *Olive-Tree* is proud and vaunts it self because it stands so firm as not to bend to ev'ry blast of Wind, as the *Reed* does. Whatever then is introduc'd into *Fables* ought so necessarily and essentially to have *Manners*, that the Author is oblig'd to bestow them upon things that naturally are not endued with them.

In short, if the names of *Man* and *Woman* which *Aristotle* makes use of, do not properly signify *Gods* and *Goddesses*, he would without doubt have omitted a great part of *Homer's* Personages. He has done well then in adding, [*or some other thing that has Manners.*] And this will denote not only *Apollo*, *Thetis*, *Jupiter*, and such like Deities, who are angry, complain, and laugh as we do, but likewise the Horse *Xanthus*, that speaks in the *Iliad*; the Horse *Rhebus*, which *Mezentius* speaks to in the *Aeneid*; *Eribo* who laments the death of *Pallas*, and ev'n *Fame* who knows ev'ry thing, and takes such a pleasure in telling Tales; the *Winds* that are so Mutinous and Seditious that they would have overturn'd the *Globe*, and dashed *Heaven* and *Earth* together by this time, if *Jove* had not taken care to set a King over them, who shuts them up close, and when he lets them out always keeps a strict hand over them. And this according to the first Interpretation is what *Aristotle* means, by these other things which have *Manners*, which the Poet introduces, and makes to speak in the Fable.

The other way of Interpreting this passage of *Aristotle* is to say, That he does not suppose that the Speeches the Personages are made to pronounce are the only means of making a *Narration Active and Dramatick*, but that 'tis so, when the *Manners* are Apparent, whether by the Persons speaking or only Acting therein, or by any other way, supposing you have a mind to give this Precept a much larger extent. In this sense, not only the Speech of *Dido* to the

Prince

Princess her Sister, to whom she discovers her passion for *Aeneas*, would be *Dramatical*; but this qualification would be likewise in the Verses that go before, where one may observe the Agitations and the Disquietude of this Queen, who from the time she first fell in Love, had lost all her Quiet and Repose.

In this sense, the learn'd Discourse of *Anchises* to his Son in the sixth Book may be likewise reckon'd among the *Dramatic* passages. First, because 'tis not the Poet that speaks, but one of his Personages. Yet I declare 'tis my opinion, that this single Qualification is not a sufficient Reason why that which is spoken should be *Dramatical*, if beside that, there are not *Manners* to be observ'd therein. Now there are *Manners* in this speech of *Anchises*. That which he says there, is the Foundation of all the Morality, the Laws, and the Religion which *Aeneas* was going to Establish in *Italy*. So that the subject Matter of this Speech is a *Moral Instruction* wherein one may see the Immortality of the Soul establish'd; and the Causes of the Passions and Manners both of the Living and the Dead. But that which makes most for our purpose is, that this Speech contains the *Manners, Habits, and Condition* of *Anchises* himself who spoke it, and of those who were in the same place with him. The Poet having us'd no small skill to engage him thereto: *Each of us*, † Says he, *feel the torments that are proper to him; then are we sent to the Elysian Fields, where we, a few in number, spend our time, &c.*

† Quisque suos patimur manes. Exinde per amplum Mittimur Elysium, & pauci læta arva tenemus. *Æn. 6.*

But whatever *Aristotle's* sense is, he does not seem to favour the simple Explication of Arts or Sciences, which are without *Manners*, and without *Action*, and which have nothing of *Morality* in them. If a Man would speak like a Poet, he must Imitate *Homer*, and conceal these things under the Names and Actions of some feign'd persons. He will not say that Salt is good to preserve dead Bodies from Corruption and Putrefaction, and that Flies would presently fill them full of Maggots: But he will say, that *Achilles* designing to revenge the Death of *Patroclus*, before he perform'd the last Offices to his dead Body, apprehends that the hotness of the Season would corrupt it, and that the Flies that lighted upon his Wounds, would engender Maggots there. He will not barely say, that the Sea offers him a Remedy against the Putrefaction he was afraid of: But he will make the Sea a *Divinity*; he will bring it in speaking: In a word he will say the Goddess *Thetis* comforts *Achilles*, and tells him, he might set his heart at rest, for she would go and perfume his Body with *Ambrosia*, which should preserve it a whole Year from Corruption. This is the way by which Poets, if they would imitate *Homer*, must speak of Arts and Sciences. One sees in this instance, that Flies breed Corruption, and fill dead Bodies with Maggots. One there sees the Nature of Salt, and the Art of preserving dead Bodies

from Corruption. But all this is express'd Poetically, and with all the Qualifications requisite to that Imitation, which according to *Aristotle* is essential to Poetry: All is reduc'd into Action. The Sea is made a Person that speaks and acts, and this *Prosopopæia* is attended with Passion, Tenderness, and Interest. In short there is nothing therein but what has *Manners*.

This Instance may suffice; it is plain, obvious, and easie to be understood. We may for Diverſion sake produce another from a Science a great deal more mysterious. The Chymists have too good an opinion of their Philosophy, and too much esteem for *Virgil*; than to think he was wholly ignorant of their Art. There are some that observe, that he has express'd as clearly as themselves, some of their choicest Operations. These Gentlemen are not satisfied with ordinary Metaphors and Allegories, such as Poets use: But they carry on these Figures and Disguises to the utmost obscurity of a Riddle. No inconvenience then would follow, should they suppose the Hero of the *Aeneid* to be a Man who makes a discovery of that Gold, which is produc'd after a miraculous manner, and which is reproduc'd and increas'd incessantly from the very first time of its being discover'd. The principle of this happy discovery is Piety, Industry, a Genius, and the blessing of Heaven; *Aeneas* was not deficient in any of these. But 'tis requisite several things should be Divin'd; For this reason *Helenus* sends *Aeneas* to *Sibyl*, he follows his advice, and sees the two birds of *Venus*. These are the two Extracts of Vitriol: For that green Mineral, which contains them, is a sort of Copper, that goes under the name of this Goddess. I omit the rest, and leave it as I found it in the Books where by chance I did read of it; at least it will suit well enough with the Justice of that Advice *Sibyl* gives *Aeneas* upon the account of the difficulty of the discovery, and the small number of those who succeed in it; and that lastly, as she says, this undertaking is not fit for a wife Man. But to return:

We may likewise reckon among the Subjects that are not Poetical, the Descriptions of Palaces, Gardens, Groves, Rivulets, Ships, and a hundred other Natural and Artificial things; when they are too long, and made after a simple, proper manner, without Allegories. This is what *Horace* calls purple Shreds, which Poets sometimes place very ill, thinking that those faults will prove the finest Ornaments of their Works. Tho' this may be good in the lesser Poems.

I believe I have already spoken in some other place concerning the manner of making the Narration Active, which is proper and essential to the Fable. And that is to reduce the Precepts and Instructions we would lay down, into Action. *Virgil* abounds with Instances of this nature. His Hero is a Legislator, but 'tis in a Poem. So that he does not appoint that such a Sacrifice should be made, or such Ceremonies observ'd: But he does all this himself. He does

not command one should submit to the Gods, nor does he prescribe a way how to punish the profane ; but he demonstrates at large the dreadful torments that attend these Miscreants.

C H A P. XI.

Of the Continuity of the Action, and the Order of the Narration.

THe *Continuity*, which the *Action* ought to have in the *Narration* is a Consequence of what has been already said, and will serve as a Principle to that we are about to observe concerning the Order which the Poet ought to mind in the Recital of all his *Action*. 'Tis upon this Principle we shall judge, when the Poet is permitted to begin the *Narration* by the beginning of his *Action*, and to relate every thing one after another, just as they happen'd and in their natural Order ; and when, on the contrary, he is oblig'd to invert this Order, and make use of the Artificial one, beginning his Poem by the Incidents of his *Action*, which happen last perhaps in order of time.

In the first place we will treat concerning *Continuity*. From the time the Poet begins to rehearse his Subject, from the time he opens his Poem, and brings his Personages, if I may so say, upon the Stage ; he ought so to continue his *Action* to the very end, that none of the Personages be ever observ'd to be Idle, and out of Motion.

This *Continuity* is sometimes to be met with in the *Action* it self, and in the first Model of the Fable. Of this Nature is the *Action* of the *Iliad*. *Apollo* is provok'd, and sends the Pestilence into the *Grecian* Army. *Agamemnon* pacifies his Anger, the Soldiers recover of their distemper, and afterwards Fight. *Patroclus* and *Hector* are kill'd, their Funeral Obsequies are over ; and so the *Action* Ends in less than fifty Days without any Interruption and Discontinuity.

But when the *Action* lasts for several Years, as in the *Odysseis* and the *Aeneid*, it cannot be *Continu'd*, tho' 'twere interrupted by nothing else but the Winter-season, a very unfit time for Wars and Voyages, which are the usual Subjects of Poems. *Ulysses* carries a whole Year with *Circe*, and seven with *Calypso* : And *Aeneas* spent several Years in *Thrace*, where he does nothing worthy to be recited by an *Epick Poet*. And perhaps he was more than a Year in *Sicily* during his Fathers Sicknels, and their Mourning for his Death. So

that the *Actions* of these two Poems are not *Continued*. But tho' the *Actions* are not *Continu'd*, yet the *Narration* ought to be so, as we hinted before.

There is no difficulty in managing the *Actions* that are *Continu'd*. The Poet has nothing to do but Rehearse them in their Natural Order, and relate the things one after another, just as they happen'd: This is what *Homer* has done in his *Iliad*.

When the *Action* is long and *Discontinu'd*, the Poet relates it in an Artificial Order. He takes nothing for the Matter of his *Narration*, but what towards the End of the *Action* has something of *Continuity* in it; and for his own share he only relates this part. For this reason *Virgil* has begun his Recital just after *Aeneas* left *Sicily*, where *Anchises* dy'd: And *Homer* at the very first makes his Hero quit the Isle of *Ogyges*, after he had staid there seven Years, all which time the Poet lets pass before the opening of his Poem. In the Sequel of the Discourse, some probable and natural occasion arises for Repeating the most considerable and necessary things which went before these beginnings. The love *Dido* conceiv'd for *Aeneas* made her extreamly curious to know his adventures. This *Passion* made the Recital thereof so Natural, that the * Poet thought himself oblig'd to make it more than once. The *Phaeacians* indeed had no Interest in the fortune of *Ulysses*; but the Poet supply'd that by making these dull Fellows mightily in love with Romantick Adventures.

This *Artificial Order* divides the *Action* into two Parts very different from each other. The principal Part contains that which the Poet relates. He takes but a little Matter, but he treats of it amply, and with all the Pomp and Majesty his Art can furnish him with. The other Part is a great deal larger in the Number of its Incidents, and in its Duration; but 'tis of less Compass should you reckon the Verses it takes up, and consequently in the Circumstances and Movements which make a great part of the Beauties of the Poem. But yet, if among the Incidents which the Poet is oblig'd to insert in that which we here call the Second and Least part of his Work, there should be any one Important Incident, he may treat of this more largely than of the rest, as *Virgil* has done the *Taking of Troy*. 'Tis true one may not treat of many of them after this manner: The rest should be more concise. Besides one sees a great deal of Difference between the Death of *Priam* describ'd in the Recitals of the second Book, and the Death of *Camilla* related by the Poet in the Eleventh. For tho' that of *Camilla* is doubtless less considerable as to the Fable, yet the Poet extends it more by half than that of *Priam*.

These two Parts of the *Epick Poem* may be compar'd to two of the

* *Iliacisque iterum demens
audire labores Expolcit,
pendetque iterum narran-
tis ab ore. Aen. 4.*

the *Dramatick*: † One of which is Acted upon the Stage before the Spectators; and the Other comprehends whatsoever is done behind the Scenes, and which we come to know of purely by the Recitals which the Actors make. * This last is less moving than the other; And let *Aeneas's* sorrow for his first Wife *Creusa* be never so great, yet her Death has nothing in it, whereby it deserves to be compar'd to that of *Dido*.

† Aut agitur res in Scenis
aut acta referur. *Hor.*
Poet.

* Segnius irritant animos
demissa per aures, Quam
quæ sunt oculis subjecta fi-
dellibus. *Id.*

The Division of the *Dramatick Action* we are now speaking of, † Gives the Poet an Advantage of keeping from the Spectators view, whatever would offend them; either by its being too horrible, as a Mother's butchering her own Children; or by its being too incredible, as the Metamorphoses of a Man into a Serpent or a Bird: Whereupon these things should only be related. So likewise the Division of the *Epick Action* gives the Poet liberty to retrench from this Action whatever would cause a Confusion in the Poem. The things that are improper for the *Epopæa* are not of the same nature with those, which ought to be excluded the *Theatre*, since that which is good in a *Dramatick* Recital, is likewise so in an *Epopæa*, which only discovers things to us by Reciting them. But on the contrary, the things, that confound the *Epick Poem*, are such as are too languishing, and which cannot admit of that Action and Motion, which are the proper Ornaments of this sort of Poem. And this is what * *Horace* orders to be excluded thence.

† Non tamen intus Digna
geri promes in scenam;
multaque tolles Ex oculis,
quæ mox narret facundia
presens. Nec pueros co-
ram populo Medea truci-
det, &c. *Id.*

* Ex quæ desperet tractatu
nitescere posse, Relinquit;
Poet.

And in truth how could *Virgil* make his Readers endure *Aeneas's* constant Attendance at his sick Father's bed, together with the Medicines, and Fomentations which ought to be made use of to recall the Spirits, and the Natural Heat into the cold Limbs of this aged Prince? And the sorrow too of *Aeneas*, which ought to have been very great, would have been but a sorry Ornament of a Poem: The Readers would not have been affected with them. Would they have bestow'd one tear upon the Natural death of a person of his Age, who had so little to do in this Poem? Therefore has the Poet very judiciously drawn a Veil over all these things.

By this means, the *Artificial Order* cuts off the languishing and unpleasant Incidents, and the Intervals of time that are void of Action, which hinders the Continuity thereof: And † by these Retrenchments it gives the Poem that continu'd force, which makes it run smoothly on throughout the whole,

† Vehemens & liquidus
puroque simillimus amari.
Hor. Poet.

* Semper ad eventum festinat, & in medias res, Non secus ac notus auditorum rapit. *Hor. Art. Poet.*

and bestows on it those Beauties which the Action in it self has not. * By this means it hastens towards a Conclusion, and at first transports the Readers into the Middle of its subject Matter, and always entertains in them

a desire and expectation to see the events as soon as possible.

Our Poets begin their *Narration* so nigh the End, that the Reader imagines the Poem would End within a few Verses. In the *Odysseïs*, the Gods order *Mercury* to go to the Isle of *Ogyges*, where *Ulysses* was detain'd by *Calypso*. He was to charge that Goddess to give him leave to depart, and furnish him with ev'ry thing that was necessary for his journey to *Ithaca*.

Virgil approaches still nearer to a Conclusion. His Hero has already left *Sicily*, and is upon his Journey to *Italy*. The second Part begins much after the same Manner: *Aeneas* arriving at the Country which the Fates had promis'd him, finds there the Gods and Men who waited his coming with Impatience; and King *Latinus* offers him his Daughter *Lavinia*, sole Heir to his Crown, in Marriage. Who would think then but this Hero was very well settled, and the Poem at an end? But a Storm casts him upon *Carthage* and furnishes the Poet with what fills the first Part. The jealousy of *Turnus*, who pretends *Lavinia* was promis'd to him, and was his due, opposes the Settlement of the *Trojans*, and affords subject Matter for the last six Books.

The Beginning of the *Action* is resum'd so pertinently that these large Recitals of *Aeneas* and *Ulysses* make no Interruption. *Aeneas* relates all that preceded his arrival at *Carthage*, and then the Poet undertakes to tell what happen'd to him in that City. This series of things is so exact, that the first Book may pass for a mere Prologue, which informs us of the Action in general, and which in particular discovers the Humors and Interest of the persons that were to appear in Play. The Poet's practice is the same in his lesser Episodes. *Venus* so resumes the Story of *Dido*, and *Diana* that of *Camilla*, that what in this Poem follows the Recitals of these two Goddesses, is the natural Consequence of what they related. We may observe the same Order in the *Odysseïs*. But the Death of *Archemorus*, the funeral Sports, and the March of the *Argives* towards *Thebes*, are by no means the Consequences of that which is contain'd in the Recital of *Hyppipyle*.

If our Poets had made the Recitals of *Ulysses* and *Aeneas* at several times they could not have connected them to the *Action* that would have follow'd, and the Order would have been less exact, and more irksome to the Readers.

Let us now in a few Words sum up all that has been said concerning the Continuity of the *Epick Narration*, and the Order *Homer* and *Virgil* have observ'd therein,

They

They have so begun, that when once their Personages have made their appearance, they never ceas'd from Acting till the End of the Poem. For this purpose, when the *Epick Action* was *Continu'd* and of a few Months duration, as that of the *Iliad*; the Poet has related it himself in the *Natural Order*. But when it lasted for several Years, as the two Others did, the Poets observ'd an *Artificial Order*, and the last part of their Subject that was only *Continu'd*, was all that they themselves related. They made their Heroes relate all that went before, and that in one speech, made upon a probable Occasion. They plac'd these Recitals so well, that the things related therein, precede immediately, and without any Interruption those which the Poet at last relates himself. So that neither the Mind, nor the Memory of the Readers are at a loss to rejoyne the Consequence of the Incidents, which they read in the Poem.

CHAP.

C H A P. XII.

Of the Duration of the Narration.

ACCORDING to the Idea we have been proposing concerning the *Continuity* and the *Order* of the *Narration*; 'tis requisite we should say thus much concerning its *Duration*, viz. That the space of a Year is to the *Epick Narration*, what the space of a Day is to *Tragedy*; and that the Winter is as improper for this great Work, as the Night is for the *Theatre*; since both being void of Action, make a vicious Interval, and an irregular *Discontinuity* in these Poems. So then, the *Duration* of the *Epick Narration* only lasts one Campaign, as the *Duration* of the *Dramatick Action* lasts an Artificial Day.

But we may carry on this Parallel a little farther, and say, that as the Time for the *Theatral Representation* is under debate amongst Learned men, and the Practice of the Ancients has its obscurities, which ev'ry one interprets in favour of himself, either for the Natural, or the Artificial day: So the precise time of the *Epopea* admits of dispute; for the Practice of *Virgil* in this matter is not very clear.

First it may be said that the *Narration* of the *Aeneid* lasts a Year and some Months. And thus the account may go. *Aeneas* parting from *Sicily* after he had interr'd his Father there, returns thither a-

† Annus exactis completur mensibus orbis, Ex quo reliquias divinique ossa Parentis Condidimus terrâ, moestasque sacravimus aras. Jamque dies, ni fallor, adest, &c. *Æn.* 5.

gain a Year after, and there celebrates his Anniversary on the very Day he dy'd on. † 'Tis a full Year, says *Aeneas*, since we interr'd my Father, and now we are return'd hither a-

gain the same day he dy'd on. So that the *Narration* beginning when *Aeneas* left *Sicily*, just after his Father's death, that makes a whole Year to the Sports of the fifth Book. By

this means the time that is requisite for the rest of this Book, for the Sixth, and for the Wars of *Italy*, will be added to the Year.

One may reduce this *Narration* into a precise Year, by saying, that these Verses cited out of the fifth Book, do indeed inform us, that it was a full Year since *Aeneas* had interr'd his Father in *Sicily*; but that neither these Verses nor any others intimate that he left *Sicily* immediately after this Action. One may then with freedom suppose that he tarry'd there as long a time, as was afterwards requisite for his Settlement in *Italy*. From whence one will infer that the *Narration* is compris'd within the compass of a Year of twelve Months, and no more.

Each of these Opinions supposes that the *Winter* is comprehended in this Narration, and that *Aeneas* spent the whole of that with *Dido*, in *Africk*, as the Poet plainly says in this Verse spoken by *Fame*.

Nunc Hyemem inter se luxu quam longa fovère.

A third Opinion supposes that the word *Hyems* in this Verse should not be understood for the *Winter-season*; but that it signifies, the same thing which it does in other passages of this very Book, that have a necessary relation to this. * Now in those other passages it does not signify the *Winter*, but a *Season* which the Rising of *Orion* renders *tempestuous*, and that happens in the *Summer*; for this Constellation rises about the *Summer Solstice*. So that the Poet had only a mind to tell us, that *Aeneas* indulg'd himself in the Amours of *Dido*, all that time, wherein the Rising of *Orion*, for about six Weeks, made him afraid to put to Sea, and excus'd him from complying so readily to the Orders of the Gods, that summon'd him to *Italy*.

* Dum pelago defavit hyemæ, & æquosus Oriens.
Quin etiam hyemæ moliris fidere classem.

By this means all the Narration of the *Aeneid* will be reduc'd into the Compass of one single Campaign, making it to begin in Summer, and to conclude before the End of Autumn in the same Year. This Opinion is grounded upon several Expressions of *Virgil*, which seem more exact than the former, tho' less agreeable to several Interpretations. *Aeneas* leaves *Sicily*, and is cast upon the Coasts of *Africk* in the Summer; and this Summer is already the seventh since the taking of *Troy*. This is what the Poet says in the person of *Dido*, when she receives this Hero into *Carthage*.

† This is now the seventh Summer since your Travels over so many Countries, and so many Seas. He spends in *Carthage* neither

† Nam te jam septima portat Omnibus errantem terris & fluctibus æstus. *Æn.* 1.

the Winter, nor any part of Autumn; but he parted thence before the End of Summer. He arrives at *Sicily* and there keeps the Anniversary of *Anchises* at the end of the same Summer he came to *Carthage* in; since the Poet says that this likewise was the seventh. * This is now the end of the seventh Summer since the Ruin of *Troy*. Lastly, the Poem ends before Autumn does, since the day before the Death of *Turnus*, the Woods had still

* Septima post Troje exitium jam vertitur æstas. *Æn.* 5.

their Leaves on, and cast their shadow. The Poet says, that † *Turnus* lay in Ambush in a Valley where the thicknes of the Leaves and the Shade favour'd very much his design. By this means the Narration of the

† Est in anfractu vallis ac-commoda fraudi, Armorumque dolis, quam densis frondibus ætrum Urget utrinque latens. *Æn.* 11.

Aeneid will comprise only one Campaign, and be all included within the

* Cum subito assurgens flu-
 &u nimbofus Orion. In
 vada cæca tulit. *Æn.* 1.

† Autumni frigore primo
 Lapſa cadunt folia. *Æn.* 6.

the two Seasons of Summer and Autumn :
 * Beginning at the Solstice and Rising of
Orion, which cast *Æneas* into *Africk*; and
 ending before the Frosts of † Autumn had
 strip'd the Leaves off the Trees.

As there are Reasons for both sides, so there are Difficulties in both. Some of them are reply'd to : And for those that seem unanswerable, we say, that the *Æneid* being uncorrect, we should not Wonder if we cannot understand all.

Homer is a great deal clearer. He has made an exact journal of the time he allows his two Poems.

The *Iliad* begins with a Plague, which lasts ten Days. The Poet has allow'd as many for the *Grecians* recovery. The Battles, that follow next, end the fifth Day. After that eleven Days are spent in the Funeral Rites of *Patroclus*, and eleven more likewise in the Funeral of *Hector*, and then the Poem Ends. The twice ten at the Beginning, and the twice eleven at the End make just two and forty Days, to which add the five in the Middle, and the whole Duration of the Action and the Narration amounts to seven and forty Days.

The Days are not so well rang'd in the *Odysseis*, but the Account is altogether as exact. The Poem opens with *Minerva*. She frees *Telemachus* from the dangers he was in at *Ithaca*, and conducts him to *Pylos*. The fourth Day she goes up to Heaven again, and brings it about that *Calypso* be ordered to dismiss *Ulysses*. On the morrow he begins a Ship, and in twenty Days finishes it ; the twenty fifth he sets Sail, and after a Voyage of twenty Days is cast upon the Island of *Corfu*, There he tarries three Days with *Alcinous*. All this makes one and fifty Days from the first opening of the Poem to the Arrival of *Ulysses* in his own Country. Eight and twenty of them he spent with *Calypso*, reckoning the four that preceded the building of his Ship ; three and twenty Days more he is upon his Journey, part of which he spent at Sea, and part with *Alcinous*. A night after he arrives in *Ithaca*. Four Days he remains incognito at *Eumeus's* Country House. On the fifth he went to his own Palace, where he was in disguise two Days, taking an account of what had happen'd and squaring his Actions accordingly. The next night he kills his Rivals, and on the morrow makes an end of discovering himself, and re-adjusting all his Affairs. Therefore adding these seven Days to the one and fifty before ; the Duration of the Narration in this Poem amounts to eight and fifty Days.

As for the Seasons of the Year the Poet gives us an occasion to guess something about it. In the *Iliad* where there is more Action and Violence, the Days are longer than the Nights, and the Season very hot. And on the contrary, *Homer* has assign'd longer and cooler Nights to the Prudence of *Ulysses* ; placing the Maturity of Autumn in the *Odysseis*, as he has the Contagious heats of the Summer in the *Iliad*.

The

The Practice of *Homer* then is without doubt to reduce the *Duration* of the *Epick Narration* into the Compass of a Campaign of a few Months. But the Difficulty of knowing the design and intention of *Virgil*, is the reason why 'tis question'd, whether one might not advance it to the Compass of a whole Year or more, and whether the Winter season ought in reason to be excluded thence.

I found my self insensibly ingag'd in the Examen of this particular question: I found it a great deal larger than I imagin'd, and I have discours'd very amply upon it, from whence several things may be deduc'd, that in my mind are of no small use for the understanding of the *Aeneid*. I here propose this Question about the time by way of Problem, and freely leave others to determine and judge what they please.

But yet I say, that in this Uncertainty, two Reasons rather incline me to a single Campaign than a whole Year.

The first is, the Practice of *Homer*, which the *Latin Poet* commonly proposes as his Exemplar, and who by wise men has been esteemed the most excellent Model for Poets to imitate. This Reason makes so much the more for me in this Treatise of the *Epick Poem*, because 'tis founded upon that Relation that is observable between the Practice of *Virgil* and that of *Homer*, the Rules of *Horace*, and those of *Aristotle*.

The other Reason is still more to my purpose; and that is, that this reducing of it to one single Campaign, is more conformable to that Idea I have propos'd concerning the Fable, and the Design of *Virgil* in this Poem.

We have already consider'd *Aeneas* as a Legislator, and Founder of the *Romans* Religion. He is so exact in observing all the Ceremonies which were performed for the Dead, that there is not the least colour he should omit one so considerable, as is that of *Mourning*, especially for the Death of his Father, for which he spares no cost. This high Veneration he has for him, makes one of the principal Qualities of his Character, and almost throughout the whole regulates the general Character of the Poem.

Now the *Mourning* of the *Romans* consist'd in two things: the one is its Duration, which last'd ten Months: the other is, that the *Romans* in this ominous and inauspicious time never undertook any thing of consequence. How then could *Aeneas* dare to undertake his Settlement in *Italy*, which was then a business of the highest Consequence to him? So then, he was oblig'd to stay in *Sicily* full ten Months after the Death of his Father; and having stay'd less than two Months at *Carthage*, he returned to *Sicily* to celebrate the Anniversary of his Death, on the same day he arriv'd there.

This agrees very well with the Expressions of the Poet which we have already cited. For the Anniversary happens at the end of the seventh

seventh Summer, a little more than a Month after the Solstice and rising of *Orion*. *Aeneas* then leaving *Sicily* in Summer during the Rising of this Constellation, which rais'd the Tempest in the first Book, he could not leave it the same Summer *Anchises* died, but must needs have left *Sicily* the Summer following, which is the seventh as the Poet says, and the same in which he returns to the Anniversary. By this means, he must needs have pass'd the Autumn, the Winter, and the Spring in *Sicily*, and have tarried there more than nine Months before his parting for *Carthage*; but he went out and came back again to it the same Summer.

In the other Opinions I neither find the Conformity of *Virgil* with *Homer*, nor the Observation of the *Roman Mourning*, to which I really think *Aeneas* was oblig'd as much as he was to the other Ceremonies in which he was so punctual. But these Reasons which make for me may not perhaps make for others. I only propose them as I was oblig'd. 'Tis for Philosophers and Criticks to examine things, to propose Reasons, and to make them intelligible, and 'tis for the Reader to draw his Inferences.

Monsieur

Monfieur *Boffu's* Treatife
OF THE
EPICK POEM.

BOOK IV.

*Concerning the Manners of the
Epick Poem.*

CHAP. I.

Concerning the Manners in General.

Under the name of *Manners* we comprehend all the natural or acquired inclinations, which carry us on to good, bad, or indifferent actions. This Definition contains three things, The first is the *Manners* themselves which we call *Inclinations*, whether they have their source and origin in our Souls, such as the Love of Sciences and Vertue; or whether they proceed from the constitution of the Body, as Anger, and the Rest, which we have in common with the Brutes. The second thing is the cause of those *Manners*, which is either Nature, or our Choice, and Industry, according as they are either *natural* or *acquir'd*. The third thing, is the effect of the *Manners*, namely
Actions

Actions whether good as that of *Aeneas*, or bad as that of *Achilles*; or indifferent as that of *Ulysses*.

Those *Manners* are *good*, which incline us to *Vertue*; and *Vertuous Actions*; those *Bad* which incline us to *Vice* and *Sin*; and those are *Indifferent* which incline us to indifferent *Qualities* and *Actions*.

A right distinction should be made between *Real Vertues*, and those that appear such, and are only mere *Qualities*. The *Real Vertues*, such as *Piety*, *Prudence*, and the like, make those who are *Masters* of them *Good*, *Praise-worthy*, and *Honest-men*. But *Real Vices*, such as *Impiety*, *Injustice*, *Fraud*, and the like, corrupt and vitiate those, who are tainted with them. Meer *Qualities* in their own Nature produce neither of these two effects, such as *Valour*, *Art*, the *Knowledge of Sciences*, and the like. *Solomon* could still preserve the *Knowledge of the Sciences* even when he was become an *Idolater*. *Aeneas* and *Mezentius* were both *Valiant*, yet one was a *Pious* and a *good Man*, the other an *Atheistical* and *profane fellow*.

'Tis farther observable that among the *Inclinations*, there are some which belong more peculiarly to some particular *Adventure*, and that are only of *Use* upon certain *Occasions*: Such for instance are *Valour*, *Clemency*, and *Liberality*. Others are more *Universal*, and appear in every thing, such as are *good Nature* and a *passionate Temper*. For a *Man* may be *passionate*, and *violent*, not only in *War*, but at a *Council board*, and upon all other occasions, as *Achilles* was; or he may be *mild* and *good-natured* even in the *heat of Battle*, as *Aeneas*. We shall call this last species of general and *Universal Manners* the *Character* of such or such a *Person*, and will treat of it more particularly.

The *Causes* of our *Manners* are either wholly *External*, or wholly *Internal*, or they may be considered as partly *External*, partly *Internal*. The *External Causes* are *God*, the *Stars* and our *Native Country*. The *mixt Causes* are our *Parents* and *Education*. The *internal Causes* are the *Complexion*, the *Sex*, the *Passions*, and the *Actions* whereby we contract these habits.

The effects of our *Manners* are the *Discourses*, the *Designs*, and the *Essays* we make to do such or such a thing, and the *Good*, *Bad*, or *Indifferent Actions*.

Poetry is not the only thing, where the *Manners* are of use. *Philosophers*, *Historians*, *Geographers*, and *Rhetoricians* treat of them as well as *Poets*. Each of these in his own way. But the *Poet* has need of all. And beside these, there are a vast number of things, which he is indispensibly obliged to be acquainted with, that he may make his *Personages* speak, and act regularly. Whatsoever has been said on this Subject, yet I cannot wholly pass it over. I shall only content my self to apply it to the practice of *Virgil*.
Therefore

Therefore before I treat of the *Poetical Manners*, I will explain at large what I have propos'd concerning the *Causes* of the *Manners*, and I shall say something concerning the *Manners* that are Foreign to *Poetry*.

C H A P. II.

Of the Causes of the Manners.

GOD is the chief of all the *Causes* in general, we shall look upon him here in particular, as the most universal and first cause of the *Manners*. He is the Author of Nature, and disposes of all things as he thinks fit. This cause renders the *Manners* of *Aeneas* good even to admiration. 'Tis superfluous to show how this Hero is favour'd by *Jupiter*, since we see *Juno*, who prosecuted him, loves and esteems his person.

The *Stars*, and principally the *Signs* and *Planets*, are the second Cause of the *Manners*. The * Poet takes notice what influence they have upon Men. When in the person of *Dido*, He proves from them that the *Tyrians* are not so dull, but that they know what esteem ought to be had for Virtue. But is it by chance, think ye, that this Poet, who elsewhere was so skillful in *Astronomy*, causes the *Planets* to act in favour of his Hero conformable to the Rules of *Astrologers*? Of the seven there are three that favour him, *Jupiter*, *Venus*, and the *Sun*: All three act visibly in the Poem in behalf of *Aeneas*. There are three others, whose influences are Malignant, *Saturn*, *Mars*, the *Moon* or *Diana*. If they act 'tis indeed against the Hero. But they appear so obscurely that one may say *Virgil* has hid them below the Horizon. Lastly, *Mercury*, whose *Planet* is said to be good with the good, and bad with the bad, acts visibly as the good *Planets* do, but he never acts alone, 'tis *Jupiter* that always sends him out. And this is the *Horoscope* which the Poet makes for the Birth of the *Roman Empire*.

The third external cause of the *Manners* is the Country in which one is Born. *Virgil* bestows great commendations on the Country of his Hero, and advances it far above *Greece*.

* As long as *Troy* was assaulted fairly by Force, it always remained Victorious. 'Twas only the fraud and Treachery of the *Grecians*, that gain'd the mastery over the generosity of the *Trojans*. So

* Fracti bello fatisque repulsi Ductores Danaum:
Æn. 2.

that according to their Countries, the one Party are brave and generous, the other Knaves and Cheats; the one Civil, the other Barbarous; the one Hardy, the other Nice, &c.

After these *Causes*, that are properly *external*, follow next the *Fathers* and *Mothers* whose blood is derived down to their Children. We cannot say that the Parents are such *Causes* as are altogether foreign to the Inclinations of those who are formed from their substance. Let us apply this to our Subject. *Aeneas* sprang from the Royal Blood of *Troy*. The first Princes of this Family were as Virtuous, as Powerful. But in process of time these two things were divided into two different branches. *Ilus* left the Crown to *Laomedon*, and his Virtue to *Affaracus*. *Priam* and *Paris* were Heirs to the first, *Anchises* and *Aeneas* to the second. By this means the Poet bestows upon his Hero the good inclinations of his Ancestors before ever he restored to him the *Regal Power*. His Piety deserv'd the Sceptre of his Fathers, and the perfidiousness of the other branch was the cause that *Priam's* Family was extirpated. The Innocent themselves felt likewise the smart of it, as * *Virgil* observes of *Polydore*.

* Postquam res Asiae,
Priamique evertere gen-
tem, Immeritam visum
superis, &c. Polydorum ob-
truncat. *Æn.* 3.

† Ἡ δὲ γὰρ Πριάμῳ γένειν
ἤχθη Χερσίν. Νῦν δὲ
δὴ Ἀνείας ἦν Τρώεσσι
ἀνάξτης, καὶ παῖδες παί-
δων, τοὶ καὶ μετ' ὅτ' αὖ
γένετ' αὖ. *Iliad.*

This is more clearly expressed by the Greek Poet. † He lays down the genealogy of *Priam* and *Aeneas*, and adds that *Jupiter* hated the Family of *Priam*, and that notwithstanding *Aeneas* was to command the *Trojans* and transmit the Empire to his Posterity. These are the advantages *Aeneas* derived from his Father. His Mother was the Goddess, from whom he deriv'd the Character of Good Nature, and Meekness which was the finest Ornament of his Manners.

Parents likewise hand down to their Children, their Nobility, which often makes a great deal of difference between those, that are Noble, and those that are not. Now that which happens often, or ordinarily in these things is the Rule which the Poet ought to go by. It would argue Ignorance, or Childishness to do otherwise: And one should fall under these Censures, if for instance, one should cause a Poetical person to be born under an unlucky Constellation, to whom we would give good inclinations and a happy fortune; whatsoever Instances may be opposed against the pretended doctrine of Astrologers, yet that which is admirable, and extraordinary in Poets, does not consist in contradicting the common received opinion about these things.

Education is another Cause of the Manners which depends upon the two former, to wit, the Care and Quality of the Parents. *Vir-*

gil has not forgot this Cause. Those likewise with whom one converses, contribute very much towards those various Inclinations that proceed from Education. Whether one suits himself to their Humour, or whether that conformity of Humours makes these Conjunctions, and presides o'er the choice of Friends, the Companions of *Aeneas* are good, sage, and pious Persons? * *Japis* his Physician prefers his Skill in Physick beyond the Glory of Arms, even in that only design of prolonging the life of his old Father.

* Ipse suas artes, sua munera lætus Apollo Augurium Citharamque dabat ceteræque sagittas. Ille ut depositi proferret fata Parentis, Scire potestatem

herbarum usumq; medendi Maluit, & mutas agitare inglorius artes. *Æn.* 12.

Education depends likewise on the Government and the State, under which one is brought up. One conceives quite different Sentiments under a *Monarchy*, than one should do under a *Commonwealth*. This Point was of some moment to our Poet, who was willing to change the Inclinations of his Audience. 'Tis upon this account that the Inclinations of all the Personages in the *Aeneid* are unanimously for a *Monarchy*. And though the *Thuscans* who were used cruelly by *Mezentius*, revolt from him, and drive him thence; yet this is not as the first *Brutus* did, to change the Face of the State, by banishing both the King and his Power together, but in order to submit themselves to a more just Monarch.

We may take into the number of *mixed Causes*, the Riches, the Dignities, the Alliances, and the other Goods of Fortune, which we possess; upon which I will only make this Reflection: That a King, or General of an Army, do not always act in that Character.

Achilles was both. But he preserves nothing of his Sovereignty, but that Independency by which he refuses to obey *Agamemnon*, as otherwise he ought. The Fable requires only this, and *Homer* has said no more of it. His *Achilles* is rather a private Man, and a single Voluntier, who only fights in his own Quarrel, than a King or a General. So that nothing of all the good that is done any where else, but where he is present, is owing either to his Valour or his good Conduct.

Virgil's Hero is quite of another make. He never divests himself of his Dignities; he acts in the full Character of a General. And this advances his Martial Atchievements to a higher pitch of Glory than those of *Achilles*. The Absence of both these Heroes gives their Enemies great advantage against them, and is an Evidence how great and necessary the Valour of both of them is. But this is peculiar to *Aeneas*, that whatever good is done in his Absence, is owing to his Conduct. Two things preserved the *Trojans* from the rage of *Turnus*: The one is the Rampart and Fortifications of the Camp they were intrenched in. *Aeneas* himself designed and

over-looked these Works. The other is the good order they observed to defend themselves: And in this they did no more than what he ordered them at parting. And here is a Glory which the Hero in the *Iliad* can make no pretensions to; and if one would compare both together, *Achilles* is a valiant Soldier, and *Aeneas* a compleat Commander.

The last Causes of the *Manners*, which we propounded, are purely *internal*. The chief and most general of these is the *Complexion*. Poets place high Characters upon Bodies of the largest size, and the finest make. * *Virgil* gives

* Os humerosque Deo similis. *Æn.* 1.

† Gravior & pulchro veniens in corpore virtus. *Æn.* 5.

his *Hero* the Stature and Visage of a God: And he observes * that Vertue is most charming, when a good Soul is lodged in a Body that resembles it.

The *Complexion* varies according to the difference of Ages and Sexes. *Turnus* is younger than *Aeneas*, because *Aeneas* ought to be sage and prudent, and *Turnus* furious and passionate like another *Achilles*. I will not transcribe here what *Horace* has writ concerning the *Manners* that are proper to every Age.

As for the Sex, *Aristotle* says in his *Poetry*, that there are fewer good Women than bad; and that they do more mischief than good in the World. *Virgil* is but too exact in copying this Thought. *Venus* is the Mother and Protectress of *Aeneas*: She seems to be good-natured through the whole. *Sibyl* likewise favours him. *Cybele* and *Andromache* are well-wishers to him, and wish him no harm; but they appear but little. For this small number of good Women, how many bad ones are there, or at least such as bring a great deal of Mischief upon this Hero? *Juno* is his profess'd Enemy, and employs against him *Iris*, *Juturna*, and *Alecto*. *Dido* thought of ruining him at *Carthage*, and calls in to her aid her Sister, a Nurse, and an Inchantress. The *Harpies* drive him out

* Trojæ & Patriæ communis Erynnis. *Æn.* 2.

of their Island. * *Helena* is a Fury that ruins the *Trojans* and *Græcians* themselves. The *Trojan Women*, though his own Subjects, set his Fleet on Fire. *Amata* contemns the

† *Sylvia* prima soror, &c. *Æn.* 7.

‡ Quid in eversâ vidi crudelius urbe? &c. Causa mali tanti conjux iterum. *Æn.* 6.

Order of the Gods, and the Will of the King her Husband; and with the *Latin Women* first blows the Trumpet to Rebellion. † *Sylvia* puts her upon it. The Women, that were most esteemed by this *Hero*, brought insupportable Troubles upon his Head. At the end of the Second Book, one may see his Sorrow for *Creusa*. And ‡ the innocent *Lavinia* is the cause of all the Miseries he suffers in the six last Books.

Camilla bears Arms against him, but she gives us an occasion to make a more particular Reflection. *Virgil*, in her, has given us a pretty Example of the Inconstancy of the Sex. It seems as if this courageous Damofel was brought in to fight, only to teach other Women, that War is none of their Business, and that they can never so far divest themselves of their natural Inclinations. There still remains something in them which will prove the ruine of themselves, and which is a great prejudice to those who rely upon them. The Poet does admirably apply this Point to the *Manners* of that Sex; and makes use of this *Heroine* in the case, who seems to be wholly of another make. In the heat of the Battel she perceives a Warriour with rich Amour. She was presently for having the Spoils of this Enemy; and the Motives the Poet gives her are looked upon as a Woman's greedy Desire. This levity of the Sex makes *Camilla* forget her Dignity, and the taking care of her safety, and 'tis followed with very mischievous Effects. She is killed, the Cavalry routed, and *Aeneas* preserved from an Ambuscado he was just falling into.

The *Passions* likewise are the *internal Causes* of the *Manners*. If we love any Person, we love all we see in him, even to his Failings. If we hate any one, we have an Aversion for even his Perfections: So great a Power has *Passion* over us. When *Dido* loves *Aeneas*, this Hero, in her Eye is nothing less than a * God. † But is she incensed against him? Then he is no longer one of Humane Race, but some hard-hearted Rock of Mount *Caucasus* is scarce good enough to be his Father.

* Credo equidem, nec vana fides, genus esse Deorum. *Æn.* 4.

† Nec tibi diva parens, generis nec Dardanus auctor, Perfide! sed diris genuit te cauribus horrens *Caucasus*, *Hyrcaezque* admœrunt ubera tygres. *Ibid.*

But the most excellent of all the *Causes* of each Man's *Manners* is his own *Actions*. This Cause imprints the strongest *Habits*. 'Tis that in which we have the greatest share. 'Tis that which creates to us the greatest Honour, if the *Manners* it produces be good; and, which on the other hand is our greatest shame, if they be bad. *Virgil* has very divinely touched upon this Cause, when he says that next after God, Good *Manners* are the chiefest and the best Recompence of Good *Actions*.

* Ye brave young Men, what equal Gifts can we;

What Recompence for such Deserts Decree?
The greatest sure, and best you can receive,
The God's, your Vertue, and your Fame
will give.

[Englished thus by Mr. Dryden.]

* Quæ vobis, quæ digna, viri, pro talibus ausis Præmia posse rear solvi? Pulcherrima primum Dii moresq; dabunt vestri.

CHAP. III.

Concerning the Manners of other Sciences besides Poetry.

Geography, History, Philosophy, and Rhetorick, teach nothing concerning the Manners, but what the Poet should be acquainted with. We will only here make a slight Application of it to our Subject.

The Geographers in the Tracts they write concerning the Situation of the Seas and Continent, do likewise inform us of the diversity of States and Governments, of the Employments, the Inclinations, the Customs of the People, together with the Fashion of their Habits. The Speech of *Remulus*, in the Ninth Book of the *Aeneid*, is all Geographical. It contains the Education of the *Italians*, and their War-like Manners adapted to every Age; and it ends with an *Antithesis*, wherein he reproaches the *Trojans* with the Effeminacy of their Clothing, as a certain Sign that their Inclinations were opposite to those he had been describing. There are several other Passages in the *Aeneid*, where this Effeminacy of their Apparel is described, and the Reproach of it cast upon *Aeneas* himself with some sort of *Emphasis*. But *Virgil* very dexterously turns off from his Audience, who were the Progeny of the *Trojans*, this small Reproach, which might else have reflected upon them. He says, that the *Romans* did not derive from their Fathers any of that effeminate Fashion: But on the other hand, that the *Trojans* accommodated themselves to the more manly and generous Customs of the *Italians*.

History, as well as *Geography*, describes the Manners and the Customs of States, and People in general. But *History* adds likewise thereto the Inclinations and Manners of particular Persons, which it names. Both of them treat equally of the Manners as indifferent, writing with no other Design than to demonstrate them as they really are. 'Tis true the Notices they give, serve for the Conduct of a Man's Life, and each Man is to look upon the Examples he meets with as so many Precepts, which teach him his Duty. But this Application does not so much belong to these two Arts, as to *Moral Philosophy*.

Poetry takes from *History* and *Geography*, what both of them say concerning the *Morals*. The Poet describes things in general, as *Geography* does, and usually it claps them under particular Names, as in *History*. Sometimes it joins both these two things together, and makes the Application of them it self.

* *Virgil*

* *Virgil* being about to describe the particular Manners of *Sinon*, advertises his Readers, that in the Villainy of this single *Græcian* one might discover the Wickedness of the whole Nation. *Moral Philosophy* contains in it the simple knowledge of the Manners, it suffers none that are either bad, or indifferent. It treats of them only with a design to render them good. The *Virtues* are always good. These it proposes that we may embrace them. The *Vices* are always evil, and it teaches how to avoid them. The *Passions* in themselves are indifferent, it corrects what is ill in them, and puts us in a Method how to make a right use of them, and bring them over to *Vertue's* side. There are some Inclinations that are so indifferent they cannot alter their Property. Such are those of young Children before they are capable of Good or Evil. *Philosophy* looks upon them not to be so much Manners, as the cause of future Manners. We can produce an Instance of this without quitting our usual Guides. *Horace* is no less a *Philosopher* than he is a Poet. † 'Tis worth taking notice what he relates concerning a Man of *Canusium*, *Servius Oppidius* by Name. He had a plentiful Estate left him by his Progenitors. Before his Death he bequeaths two of his Lordships to his two Sons, and gave them this Advice: *I have observed that you, Aulus, have managed your Play-things after a careless manner, either gaming, or giving them inconsiderately away: And you, Tiberius, on the other hand, are always counting your Trifles, seem very anxious, and look about for holes to hide them in. This makes me afraid you will both ruin yourselves by two contrary Vices; The one, by being as Prodigal as Numentanus; The other as covetous as Cicuta. Wherefore I charge you both, and conjure you, by the Guardian-Gods of our Family, that you, Aulus, diminish nothing of the Estate I leave you, and that you, Tiberius, never increase it; but live contented with what Nature, and your Father, think sufficient for you.* This is the way *Philosophy* treats of the Inclinations of Children. The Conclusion, and all the Commands of this prudent Father, are for riper Age.

Virgil treats of the Doctrine of the *Passions*, not only as a *Moral*, but as a *Natural Philosopher*. He renders a Reason of these things from the Matter whereto Bodies are composed, and from the Manner whereby they are made, and united to the

* Accipe nunc Danaum
insidias; & crimine ab
uno Disce omnes. *Æn.* 2.

† *Servius Oppidius Canusii duo prædia dives Antiquo censu gnatis divisisse duobus Fertur. Et hæc motiens pueris dixisse vocatis Ad lectum: Postquam te talos, Aule, nuceſque Ferre sinu laxo, donare & ludere vidi: Te, Tiberi, numerare, cavis abscondere tristem. Extimui ne vos ageret verſania diſcors. Tu Numentanum, tu ne ſequerere Cicutam. Quare per Divos oratus uterque Penates, Tu cave ne minuas; Tu, ne majus facias id Quod ſatis eſſe putat pater, & natura coercet.* *Lib. 2. Sat. 3.*

Souls. But he does it in a *Poetical* Way, and very suitably to his Subject.

As *Rhetorick* proposes a different End to it self, so likewise does it treat of the *Manners* after a different way. The Orator's Design is not to render his Audience better than they are; he is contented if they are but convinced of that he undertook to convince them of. The better to effect this, he sides with their Humour, and their Interests, as far as his Cause will bear. He appears Modest, Prudent, and a Man of Probity, that we may hearken to him with Delight, that we may rely upon him, and that we may believe that he neither designs to impose upon us, or is in the wrong himself. He gives us a quite contrary Idea of those he speaks against. In a word, he never troubles his Head with considering which are his own true Inclinations, or what the Inclinations of others are, but studies to represent them all such as they should be, for him to gain his Cause?

The *Poet* should know all this, that so he may the better make his Personages speak. We might say that our Poets might look upon the Ancestors of their Audience, as Orators do those in whose behalf they speak. Besides *Virgil* might have considered *Dido* as his Enemy. The Treachery of *Hannibal*, and the *Carthaginians*, would have dispensed a *Roman Poet* from some Civilities, which else, perhaps, one might think were becoming him. But the Fable does sufficiently regulate the *Manners* of all the Personages, and 'tis to this one should have the chiefest regard.

The *Poet* as well as the *Orator* has his Auditors. All the difference I find is, that they are not so few in number, nor so fickle, nor so subject to particular Passions and Inclinations. The *Poet* writes for his whole Country, he must be read every hour, at all times, and by sober Persons. He has nothing then to do, but to study in general the Humour of his own Nation, and the good Inclinations of his Prince, if he lives in a Monarchy as *Virgil* did. But if a Prince has bad Inclinations, and an Aulour is so complaisant as to spoil his Poem, the better to accommodate himself to them, he exposes himself to very shameful Censures.

The *Poet*, as well as the *Orator* and *Philosopher*, is obliged to appear a grave, prudent, and honest Man. For this reason, and because he is obliged to teach us Vertue, he is engaged to be perfectly acquainted with *Morality*, and to be truly vertuous. This is a practical Science; and is not learnt by empty Speculations. If a good and solid Moral does not correct our Passions, 'tis almost impossible but our Passions will make us think the *Moral* false. We are not apt to condemn those Faults in which we take delight. We had rather believe that there are not Vices, than acknowledge that we our selves are vicious. If *Horace* had reason to say, that *Homer* would not have given such Commendations of Wine if he had

had not lov'd it. What can one think of those who take so much Delight and Pleasure in that which is the most shameful and criminal in our Passions? who make of them the most moving and tenderest Passages of their Poems? and who turn all infamous Amours into such Gallantries as an honest man and a generous Cavalier may reckon among his good Fortunes? One shall never make Vice odious, if one represent nothing of it but what is amiable and pleasant. Those who represent it only under a plausible Disguise, give us reason to think, that they only expose it more to view thereby, and that their Lives are of a piece with their Moral, and their Writings. If there are any Readers that are of the same mind, 'tis not to those a Man should suit himself. This would be on the other hand to destroy the most essential Rules of Poetry, and the Fable. A pernicious Art is no Art, or at least one not to be tolerated. If there are no other Readers to be met with, and if a Poet is oblig'd out of Complaisance to be debauch'd, woe to those who encourage such a Corruption; and who prefer the Glory of being Poets, to that of being honest Men.

These Reflections are not beside my Subject, since they serve to shew what is the Practice of *Homer* and *Virgil*. These Pagans have not sullied the Majesty of their *Episodes* by these vicious Delicacies. *Ulysses* is cold to *Circe's* Charms. He is melancholy with *Calypso*. *Bryseis* and *Chryseis* only inflame *Agamemnon* and *Achilles* with Anger. *Camilla* has no Gallants. There is scarce mention made of *Turnus's* Passion for *Lavinia*. And all the Amour of *Dido* is treated only as a vicious Treachery for which this miserable Queen is punish'd severely.

C H A P. IV.

Of the Manners of Poetry.

THAT which is peculiar to Poetry in the Doctrine about the Manners, is, to make the Reader know what are the Inclinations which the Poet bestows upon his Personages, whether good, bad, or indifferent, no matter which. *Aristotle* defines the Manners of Poetry thus: * *The Manners*, says he, are that which discovers the Inclinations of him that speaks, and that whereby we know on what he will determine, before one sees that he is carried that way or actually rejects it. From whence this Philosopher concludes, † That the Manners are not

* Εἰς ὃ ἡ ἡθὺς αὖ τὸ τιθεῖται ὁ ποιητὴς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ ἥτοι καὶ τοῦ ἄλλου, εἰ καὶ οὐκ ἐστὶν δὴλον, εἰ δευτέρως, ἢ ὁ ποιητὴς οὐκ ἔστιν αὖτις αὖτις, καὶ ἔστιν ἡθὺς αὖτις τῶν λόγων. *Idem* c. 6.

always in all sorts of Discourses. An Instance will clear this Definition.

In the first Book of *Virgil*, *Aeneas* appears to be very pious, and more forward to execute the Will of the Gods, than any other thing. In the fourth Book a very difficult Choice is proposed to him. On one side Gratitude, Love, Natural Tenderness, and several weighty Considerations, engage him not to part from *Dido*: on the other side, an express Order of the Gods commands him to *Italy*. Before any one sees what side he will take to, and on what he will resolve, That which he has said ought to have demonstrated what his Will and what his Inclinations are, and to what he will determine. His former Speeches which discover to me his future Resolution, are the Poetical *Manners*. These make one foresee that he would leave *Dido*, and obey the Gods: he does so: The *Manners* then are good, and duly order'd. If to stay with *Dido*, he had disobey'd the Orders of *Jupiter*; the *Manners* would have been bad; bad, because they would have made one foresee a Choice, and a Resolution quite contrary to that which he ought to take. But if nothing had foreshewn me the Resolution of *Aeneas*, nor what side he had taken to, nor the contrary, in this case there would have been no *Manners*.

Therefore, as in *Philosophy* the *Manners* are good when they make that Man so in whom they are; and they are bad when they incline him to Vice and Evil Actions: and as in *Rhetorick* they are good when they manifest the Person that speaks to be honest, prudent, and sincere, and the Person against whom he speaks to be guilty of the contrary Vices; and evil when he that speaks seems vicious, and imprudent; and his Adversary sage, and well advised independantly from what they are in Reality: so likewise in an *Epoëa* the *Manners* are good when one may discover the Virtue or Vice, the good or bad Inclinations of those who speak or act; but bad when a good man appears vicious, or a wicked man seems to have good Inclinations.

So that the *Manners* of *Aeneas*, and those of the Atheist *Megentius* considered Poetically, are both equally good, because they equally demonstrate the Piety of the one, and the Impiety of the other, which are the Characters the Poet bestowed upon them, and under which they are always represented by him. But in the *Hippolyte* of *Seneca* the *Manners* of *Phadra's* Nurse are very bad, because this Woman is very wicked, and speaks very fine things. At first she persuades this unhappy Queen, passionately in love

* Deum esse amorem
rurpiter vitio favens Fin-
xit libido; quoque libe-
rior foret, Titulum furori
ruminis falsi dedit.

with her Son-in-law, to the Virtue of Con-
tinence. * 'Tis Passion, says she, which to
countenance the Vice, is not ashamed to
make Love a God; and for a greater Li-
centiousness therein, it has disguised this
infamous Brutality under the Name of a
false

false Deity, &c. When a Body hears a long Speech full of those chaste Thoughts, would not one think that she who speaks is *Chastity* her self come down express from Heaven to banish from the Earth all unlawful Love? But yet observe what a Part this Nurse acts in the remaining part of the Poem. 'Tis she her self that speaks, and explains her Character. † *If the amorous Flame rages so much within your Breast, never value what the World says of it. Common Report seldom favours Virtue and Truth: but speaks favourably of the most profligate, and says worse of good men than of others. Let us try to bend the mind of this stubborn and untractable Youth. Let it be my Business for once. Let me take this rough Young-man to task, and for your sake touch the very heart of this resentless Creature.* Here's good Morality turn'd out of doors in an instant. Surely Seneca's Design in making her speak thus, was only to put her Audience upon admiring her fine Faculty of discoursing *Pro* and *Con*, and what a great many pretty Sentences she had got by heart. Let the case be how it will, since he had a design to make use of this Nurse to debauch the chaste Resolution of *Hippolytus*, he makes her speak well enough this second Speech, and he re-assumes the *Poetical Goodness*, when he quits the *Moral Goodness*, and when he makes her vent such profligate Maxims.

Since then the *Goodness* that is proper to the *Poetical Manners* is to make them appear such as they are; it is necessary to observe, what are the things that discover to us the Inclinations of the Personages.

The first thing is the Speeches and Actions. ‡ *There are Manners in a Poem* (says Aristotle) *if as we said the Speeches and the Actions discover to us any Inclination.*

The Poet makes his Personages speak and act as he pleases. So that these two things are owing to him, they are wholly at his disposal. And they are the foundation of all the rest. When the *Manners* are well express'd after this way, they are denoted purely and simply by the term *Good*; and this * *Goodness* makes their first Qualification. Aristotle places it in the front of all the rest, that it may be the more exactly observed. † *Horace* likewise orders the Poet to be exact in demonstrating the *Manners*.

† Si tam protervus incubat menti furor, Contemne famam, fama vix vero faver, Pejor merenti metior, & pejor bono. Tentemus animum tristem & intractabilem. Meus iste labor est, aggredi juvenem ferum. Mentemque fœvam flectere immittis viri.

‡ Ἐξὲν δὲ τῶν ποιητῶν ἡ ἀριστεία ἐν τῇ ἐκφράσει τῶν ἡρώων καὶ τῶν πράξεων αὐτῶν. Aristot. Poet. c. 15.

* Ἐν τῇ ἀριστερίᾳ τῶν ποιητῶν ἡ ἀριστεία. Ibid.

† Notandi sunt tibi mores Poet.

The second thing is the Knowledge which a Genius, Study, and Experience, gives us of the *Inclinations*, that are proper to each Person according to the Complexion, the Dignity, and all the other Causes whether natural or acquir'd, internal or external, all which we mention'd before. As soon as the Poet has given the Dignity of a King to one of his Personages, without hearing him speak, or seeing him act, we know that he ought to be grave, majestic, jealous of his Authority, and the like. The Inclinations should be *suitable* to that which the Poet has propos'd; and ‡ this *Conformity* and *Suitableness* makes the second Qualification of the *Manners*.

‡ *Convenientia sive. Hor. Poet.*
 Δόκιμον ὃ τὸ Ἀρετῆσι.
 Arist. Poet.

The third thing is the Knowledge which we deduce from the Fable or the History. This sort of Discovery is comprehended under the Name of *Common Opinion* or *Fame*, for the Reasons we have already mentioned. So that when a Poet has nam'd *Alexander*, we know that the Inclination of this Personage is all for Greatness and Glory, and that his Ambition is larger than the Extent of the whole Earth. If he introduces *Achilles*, we know he is angry, passionate, and impatient. The *Manners* of these Heroes in the Poem should be like to that which *Fame* has reported of them; and this *Resemblance* makes the third Qualification of the *Manners*.

* *Famam sequere. Hor. Poet.*
 Τεῖνον ὃ "Ὀμῶν. Arist. Poet.

Lastly, because the Poems may be divided into two parts, as the *Aeneid*, the one half whereof requires Piety and Patience, and the other Violence and War, a Man may fancy, according to these so different States, he may likewise make the Characters of his Hero different. And then the *Manners* of each Part will be good in particular. But because the Speeches and the Actions of the first Part have discovered the Inclinations which the Poet gives his Hero, and because the Reader sees 'tis so in the Fable and History, and has the same Effect as common Fame; this would be to offend against the first and third Qualification if we change the Character that is known: from whence it follows, that the Poet is oblig'd to make it constant and *Even*, that is, such at the End of the Poem, as it appear'd to be at the Beginning: and this † *Evenness* of the Character is the fourth Qualification of the *Manners*. So that there are four things to be observed in the *Manners*: first, that they be good; secondly, *suitable*; thirdly, *like*ly; and fourthly, *even*. These four Qualifications are comprehended in *Aristotle's* Definition; so that if one should transgress any one of these, he would transgress this Definition by making us pass a wrong Judgment upon the Inclinations

† *Servetur ad inum Qualis ab incepto processerit & sibi constet. Hor. Poet.*
 Τεῖνον ὃ Ὀμῶν. Arist. Poet.

Definitions are comprehended in *Aristotle's* Definition; so that if one should transgress any one of these, he would transgress this Definition by making us pass a wrong Judgment upon the Inclinations

nations of a Personage, and the Resolutions he ought to take.

The most important and hardest thing is to distinguish these two sorts of *Goodness* in the *Manners*: the one, which we may call *Moral Goodness*, and which is proper to *Vertue*; and the other *Poetical*, to which the most Vicious Men have as much Right as the *Vertuous*. It consists only in the Skill of the Poet, to discover rightly the Inclinations of those he makes to speak and act in his Poem. That which raises the greatest Scruple, is, that the *Poetical Manners* suppose the others; and *Aristotle* not only speaks of these two sorts in his *Poesie*, but farther, he makes use of the same \ddagger Term to express these two sorts of *Goodness*.

\ddagger Χρησιν.

To wind our selves out of this Difficulty, 'twill not be amiss to begin here, by examining, whether according to *Aristotle*, the *Poetical Hero* ought necessarily to be an honest and *vertuous Man*. For if this be not so, then 'tis plain that when *Aristotle* requires for the first and most principal Quality of the *Manners* that they be good, he would not be understood to speak of that *Moral Goodness* which makes Men good, and which is inseparable from *Vertue*. So that though we do not perhaps penetrate through all the Obscurity of this Expression, yet we shall at least know the bottom of his Thoughts. And since this Question is necessary, we shall not stick to add Reason, and the Authority of others, to that of *Aristotle*; and that will establish it the better.

CHAP. V.

Whether the Hero of the Poem ought to be an Honest Man, or no?

THIS Question will seem unreasonable to those who have but one single Idea of their Heroes; and who acknowledge none of that Name, but those excellent Men who are endued with every Virtue, are Masters of their Passions, and all their Inclinations, and whom an excellent and Divine Nature raises above the rest of Mankind. But neither the Ancient Poets, nor the Masters of this Art ever thought of placing their Heroes in so high a Sphere, without thinking it lawful to put them in a lower form: 'Tis requisite then to make the same Distinction between a Hero in *Morality*, and an Hero in *Poetry*, as we did between *Moral* and *Poetical Goodness*, and to say that *Achilles* and *Mezentius* had as much right to the *Poetical Goodness*, as *Ulysses* and *Aeneas*: So that these

two cruel and unjust Men are as regular Heroes of Poetry, as these two Princes that are so just, so Wise, and so Good.

In the Poem it self this Term admits of two senses. Sometimes it signifies indifferently all the persons of Note. So that not only *Aeneas* and *Turnus*, but likewise *Entellus* in the sports of the Fifth Book, and *Misenus* the Trumpeter of *Aeneas* in the Sixth, are styl'd *Heroes* by the Poet. But though the Name of *Hero* may be also bestow'd on other Personages, yet there is so particular an Application of it made to the first, that when one simply says *the Hero*, by that Name we understand only *Achilles* in the *Iliad*, *Ulysses* in the *Odyssey*, *Aeneas* in the *Latin Poem*; in a word the principal Personage in any Poem.

There is likewise a particular signification of the Word *Heroick* when 'tis used to denote an *Epopea*, and so distinguish this sort of Poem from others. *Aristotle* and *Ovid* give this Name not to the Poem, but to the Verses made use of therein, and which they likewise call *Hexameter Verses*. This last has been almost the only Name we have retain'd. If we should call *Epick Poems* *Heroick Poems*, because of the *Heroick Verses* that are made use of therein, one might with as much reason call the *French Epopeas* *Alexandrine Poems*, since the Verses they use in these Poems are called *Alexandrines*. And if the Name *Heroick* comes from the Personages of the Poem, who are styl'd *Heroes*; *Tragedy* would be as much an *Heroick Poem* as the *Epopea* would, since the Action and the Personages of *Tragedy* are no less *Heroick*, than the Action and the Personages of the *Epopea*.

But I question whether these Reflections be so useful as to deserve so many Words. They may only serve to discover to us the different use of the Terms *Hero*, and *Heroick* among the Ancients, and the Moderns; and to prevent condemning the first for such Notions, which they never follow'd. When we know that they did not affix the Idea of Vertue, to these Terms taken in a Poetical sense, that they never confin'd the Name of *Hero* only to the principal Personage in the Poem, and that they did not call the *Epopeas* by the Name of *Heroick Poems*: We shall not in these Works look for Examples of a real and excelling Vertue, and no one will wonder that *Horace* has said on the contrary, that all the *Iliad* where so many *Hero's* lost their lives, contains nothing but Injustice, Violence, Passion, and Wickedness.

I have omitted one signification of the word *Hero*, which may be considered as *Moral*, and as *Poetical*. In this sense we call some Men that were born of some Deity, and a Mortal Person, as *Achilles* who was the Son of the Goddess *Thetis* and *Peleus*; and *Heracles* who was the Son of *Jupiter* and *Alcmena*. But this lays no obligation upon Poets to make these Heroes good Men: Because there were likewise wicked Gods. And one may likewise observe that

* Monstrum Horrendum.
Visceribus miserorum &
sanguine vescitur atq.
Æt. 3.

† At furis Caci mens ef-
fera, nequid inausum Aut
ve fuisset. *ibid.* 2.

intentatum scelerisve dolive fuisset. ~~En. 8.~~

• Τὰς ἐν τῇ φύσει ἀρετὰς
ἡγεμονίας εἶναι καὶ θείας.
Arist. de Moribus ad Ni-
comachum lib. 7. c. 1.

† Ὁ μάρτυς ἀπὸ τῆς
λαμπῆς. Ἐστὶ δὲ τοιαῦτα
ὁ μάρτυς ἀπὸ τῆς διακονίας καὶ
δικαιοσύνης, μάρτυς καὶ τοῦ
κρίματος καὶ μαχηθῆναι, διὰ
Αγ. Πότ. c. 13.

• *Sir Medea ferox iavi-*
gaque :
Perfidus Ixion-
Her. Poet.

But since lastly, both *Aristotle* and *Horace* approve of *Homer's* practice in the *Manners* he has given to *Achilles*, and since they propose this Hero, as a Model for other Poets to imitate; the Bad Morals of this Personage should convince us, that according to the Rules

Rules of *Aristotle* and *Horace*, and according to *Homer's* practice, 'tis by no means necessary that the principal Person of an *Epopée* should be an honest Man. For never does an honest Man prefer his own passion and private Interest to the publick Cause, the Glory of his Country, the Honour and the Life of his Innocent Friends. Never did an honest Man use such vile Language as this to his General, *Go thou Impudent, Drunken, fearful Fellow; there are none but drones who obey thee.* These contumelies are Seditious, and of very bad consequence, and they are so much the more Criminal, because he who said them might be the Ringleader of a Faction: A good Man, if God denies him any thing, will never break out into a passion against him, and will never tell him that he will be revenged on him if he can. 'Tis only profane, and Mad-men that speak thus.

Was *Aristotle* ignorant of these continual Extravagancies of *Achilles*? Or did this learned Philosopher take them for real Vertues? There is not the least colour for such a Thought. We should more probably believe that *Aristotle* considered this Poetical Hero only as a Savage, directly opposite to the Hero of his *Morality*. For in the passage above cited, *he opposes this Brutality, to the Heroick and Divine Vertues. Because a God and a Beast are incapable, the one of Vice, and the other of Vertue.* And in truth the one of these Natures is of too high, and the other of too low a pitch. Laws are made for neither the one, nor the other of them. And is not this what *Horace* says of the Character of *Achilles*? *He should not acknowledge that he was under the eye of any Laws.* Therefore there is no medium; he belongs to one of the two contraries which *Aristotle* proposes, either above or below Mankind; he is Divine or Brutal. And which to fix upon is no hard matter. *Horace* says he is a Fool.

* Non ego paucis Offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit, Aut humana parum cavit natura. Poet.

Homer, 'tis true, has some faults, and * *Horace* owns it; but the Character of *Achilles* cannot be one of these faults, which are so few, are no offence, and are owing either to humane frailty, or a pardonable negligence. These are the faults *Horace* censures, or to speak more properly, which he excuses in *Homer*. And can this be applied to the Character of *Achilles*?

We conclude this Point by confirming the practice of *Homer* and the Authority of *Aristotle* and *Horace* with a reason drawn from the Essence of the Poem according as we propos'd it. The Moral does as well teach us how to avoid Vices as (in conformity to *Horace*) we said concerning the *Iliad* and *Achilles*; as it does how to imitate Vertue, as *Horace* observes of the other Poem, and the other Hero of *Homer*. And lastly the Fable which is the very Soul of the Poem, and which is of the same nature in *Homer* as in *Æsop*,

is as regularly capable of the most base and Criminal Men, and Animals for its first and only Personages, as it is of the most generous and the most praise-worthy.

Without dwelling then upon any new proofs which the Inference will afford us, we may conclude, that Reason and the nature of the Poem, the practice of *Homer*, and the precepts of *Aristotle* and *Horace*, do all inform us that 'tis not at all necessary that the Hero of a Poem should be a good and vertuous Man: And that there is no Irregularity in making him as treacherous as *Ixion*, as unnatural as *Medea*, and as Brutal as *Achilles*.

CHAP. VI.

Of the Poetical Goodness of the Manners.

What we are going to deliver here concerning the Goodness of the Manners, is only an Explanation of what Aristotle has writ about it in the fifteenth Chapter of his Poetry. The whole Passage runs thus: * *There are four things to be observed in the Manners. The first and principal is, the Method of making them good. There will be Manners in a Speech or Action, if, as we before hinted, either one or the other discovers on what the Person that speaks or acts will resolve. Let these Manners be Vicious and bad, provided they foreshew Vicious and bad Inclinations; or good and Vertuous, provided they likewise foreshew good and Vertuous Inclinations. This happens in all sorts of Conditions; for a Woman and a Foot-boy will be good in a Poetical Sense, though commonly Women are rather bad and vicious than good and vertuous, and Foot-boys are of no account.*

* Περὶ δὲ τὰς ἐν τῇ τῆς ἀρχῆς
ὄσιν αἱ δὲ ἐκ τῆς ἀρχῆς. "Εἰ
μὴ καὶ ἀποδοῦναι, ὅπως χρῆ-
ται ἡ. Ἐξὺς δὲ ἡ ἐν τῇ
ἐστίν, ἀσφαλὲς ἐκείνη, ποιεῖ
φανερὰν ὁ λόγος, τὴν ἡ
ἀποδοῦναι ὡς ἐκείνη τὴν
φύσιν, ὡς ἐκείνη φύσιν.
Χρησὺς δὲ ἐκείνη χρῆσις. "Εστ
δὲ ἐκείνη ἡ ἐκείνη, ἔκ.

This Passage has somewhat of Difficulty in it : perhaps I have changed it too much, by confining it to my fence ; but I had rather interpret it thus, than otherwise —

After what has been said in the former Chapter, I see not the least Reason to apply this *Goodness* which ought so strictly to be observ'd in the *Manners* of the Poetical Persons, to Morality and Virtue. I am of Opinion then, that we are to understand this of the Poetical Goodness; and this is what *Aristotle* would make out, when afterwards he says, that there will be *Manners in a*

Speech or Action if either of them foreshow any Inclination, Choice, and Resolution, as I have already said upon the occasion of another of Aristotle's Passages, to which Aristotle refers us.

This will likewise serve to illustrate upon what account I have render'd the Word ~~deception~~ by this Phrase, *upon what he will resolve*. This Greek Word signifies neither an Inclination, nor a simple Act of the Will, without Deliberation and Choice; but it signifies the Choice which one makes, and the Desire one has after some sort of Deliberation. Thus *Aristotle* himself explains this Term very largely in his *Ethicks*. The Word *Resolution* signifies thus much, but being used alone, is too equivocal.

Aristotle adds, that the *Manners are bad, when the Resolutions that are taken are so; and that the Manners are good, when the Resolutions are good*. I did not think that this Goodness of the *Manners* was a Poetical Goodness, and that his Meaning was, that for the well ordering of the *Manners* in a Poem, 'tis requisite that the Persons which are introduced take such Resolutions and Designs as are just and good, that an Author transgresses this Rule, and makes the *Manners* Poetically bad, when the Personages are determin'd to do a bad Action. This Interpretation would condemn the Practice of *Homer* in the Person of *Achilles*, in that of *Agamemnon*, and in almost all the Personages of the *Iliad*, and *Odysseis*. Certainly this was never *Aristotle's* Design. The *Aeneid* it self would be liable to the same Censure. *Dido*, *Turnus*, *Amata*, *Mecentius*, and several others, would spoil all the places where they act so viciously; that is to say, they would spoil the whole Poem, from one end to the other. I have therefore interpreted this place in a moral sence, and thought that *Aristotle* intended to teach us, that the *Poetical Manners* are equally good, let them be in a moral sence good or bad, provided that the Poet order Matters so that they appear before-hand to be such as either the good or the bad Persons of his Poem ought to have.

The rest of the Text confirms me farther in my Opinion, and in the Distinction I have made between the *Moral* and the *Poetical Goodness* of the *Manners*. *Aristotle* says that the goodness of the *Manners* he speaks of, may be met with in all sorts of States and conditions even amongst *foot-men who have no goodness in them*. Without doubt a foot-man cannot be Master of that goodness, to which he has no right. He will then be *morally bad*, because he will be a dissembling, drunken, cheating Rascal, and he will be *Poetically good*, because these bad inclinations will be well exposed.

This Instance of *Aristotle*, and the application he himself makes of what he says, of the *goodness of the Manners* to a *foot-man*, does teach us that he does not speak only in the behalf of Heroes, let the word be taken in what sence soever, but that this goodness he describes,

describes, as well as the other Qualifications of the *Manners*, reaches to all sorts of Poetical Persons, from Kings and Princes down to foot-men and waiting Boys. Without excepting any one in *Comedy*, *Tragedy* and the *Epopée*.

But though we mention the liberty Poets have of putting vicious Persons in a Poem, yet this liberty has its bounds and Rules, and they are not to suppose virtue and vice must go hand in hand together. 'Tis necessity and probability that regulate these two contraries. And they regulate them so, that when they give to virtue all that is possible, yet they allow vice only that which cannot be cut off from the Poem without spoiling the Fable. Thus *Aristotle* censures the *Vicious Manners*, not because they are Vicious, but because they are so without any necessity for it. But he does not blame the obstinacy of *Achilles*, as unjust and unreasonable as it was, because it was necessary to the Fable. If *Achilles* had received satisfaction from *Agamemnon* before the Death of *Patroclus*, the action would have been at an End: Or else *Achilles* would have fought no more, and so the Fable would have been defective and imperfect: Or else having no particular quarrel against *Hector*, he would have fought only for the common cause, and consequently the Siege and War of *Troy* would have been the Subject of the Poem, and the Action would have been *Episodical* and spoil'd. 'Twas necessary then that *Achilles* should be unjust and inexorable. But the Poet carries the Vices of *Achilles* no farther than the necessity of the Fable forc'd him, as we observ'd before.

'Tis time now to join the Authority of *Horace* to that of *Aristotle*. Certainly if the Poet should take special care to make the manners good in a *Moral Sense*, there would have been as little Reason to give the name of *Manners* to indifferent Inclinations in Poetry, as in Moral Philosophy, and the Masters in both Sciences would have been equally ridiculous, if they had laid down Rules and Precepts for these sorts of Inclinations. Yet

* *Horace* has done it, and after he has advertis'd us, that the observing the Rules about the *Manners* is a business of the highest Moment. The first things he presents us with to be observed, and on which he bestows the name of *Manners*, are the most indifferent inclinations of any in the World. † *A Child*, says he, *that just begins to speak and walk, without leading-strings, is most passionately desirous of being with his play-fellows*. What follows is much the same or rather worse. For if it were not altogether an indifferent thing for the little creatures at this age to fly-out into a passion for nothing, to be pacified again as easily, and to change

* Tu, quid ego & populus
mecum desiderat, audi.
Si plausoris eges æula
mentis, & usque Sessuri,
donec cantor, vos plaudite,
dicat: Etatis cuiusque ne-
tandi sunt tibi mores.
Poet.

† Reddere qui voces jam
scit puer, & pede certo
Signat humum, gestit
paribus colludere, &c.
Ibid.

their Minds every quarter of an hour, it would be a wicked thing. After the same manner does he treat of the Inclinations of Youths. They, says he, *delight in Horses, Dogs, and the Field.* They are *prone to vice, and can't endure to be reprov'd.* 'Tis only to grown up Men that he bestows honourable and rational Inclinations. He ends all with the cross-grained Humour of Old-men, that are Covetous, Fearful, Impotent, Dull, Testy and the like. Now what *Moral Goodness* is there in all these Inclinations? And yet in this that *Horace* recommends to the Poets, we are to look for that goodness which *Aristotle* says is the first and principal thing to be observed in the *Manners*. And this is likewise what may be observed in the Idea we have propos'd of the *Poetical Goodness*, which consists only in representing the *Manners* and *Inclinations* just as they are, no matter whether *Morally Good*, or *Morally Bad*.

Horace, never speaking of Vertue as a thing necessary, recommends the observing of the four Qualities in the *Manners*, which *Aristotle* himself likewise requires. The first is, that they *appear*: the second, that they be *suitable*: The third that they be *likely*: And the last that they be *Even*.

With great reason then have we affirmed that the *Poetical Goodness* consists in discovering to the Reader by the Speeches and Actions all the future Inclinations and Resolutions of the Personages, who speak and act in the Poem.

C H A P. VII.

Of the three other Qualifications of the Manners.

There is no such difficulty in the other three Qualities of the *Manners* in Poetry as in the *Goodness* of them. We have already explained in particular what *suitableness* they ought to have with the *Internal* or *External Causes*, which either raise or discover them in Men. What *Resemblance* the Poet ought to give them to what History the Fable or common report have publish'd of them; and lastly what that *evenness* of them is which ought to be observed in each Personage without permitting him to alter his Character. We shall satisfy our selves with only making here some general Reflections upon these three Qualities.

The first Reflection we make is this, that sometimes these Qualities happen so opposite in one and the same Person, that if we would do justice to the one, we shall be unjust to the other. An Instance

stance of this may be observed in the Emperour *Maurice*: His Inclinations would not have been *suitable* to the dignity of an Emperour, if one should make him covetous, and they would not be like to what we know of him, if one should make him magnificent and liberal. In truth there is a sort of avarice which Kings are capable of, to wit, the desire of heaping up vast treasures. Such was the passion of *Polymnestor* King of *Thrace* which gave *Virgil* an occasion to say, * *That this inordinate*

thirst after Riches, carried Men on to

strange extravagancies. † Such was like-

wise the passion of *Pygmalion* King of

Tyre. The question here does not lie con-

cerning this sort of Avarice, but concerning

the fordid, base niggardliness which cost so many *Roman* Souldiers

their Lives. They were Prisoners of War with the King of *Persia*,

who required but a very small rancome for them. *Maurice* re-

fuses to pay it, and by this base, unworthy denial of so small a

sum for so weighty a consideration, he cast the conqueror into such

a fit of passion, that he ordered all these miserable Souldiers of so

wicked a Prince to be butchered immediately.

It may be asked then what a Poet shall do that he may neither

offend against the *suitableness* of an Emperour's *Manners*, nor

against the *Resemblance* of them to that which is to be found in

History about them? In answer to this I say, that a Man will

not be perplex'd with these sorts of Personages, if in the composition

of his Poem he will but observe the Method I proposed in my

first Book. In the first place the Author will make his Fable with

universal persons, and without Names, and consequently without so

much as thinking of *Maurice*. And when he has a mind to make

the Episodes, and shall look out for particular Names to give to his

Personages, if in his platform he meets with a Miser, he will not

think it adviseable to give him the title and Dignity, either of a King

or an Emperour: And if in the same platform he meets with a liberal

and magnificent Person, to be sure he will never chuse the Emperour

Maurice to act this part. So that to the question propounded it

may be answered, that the Emperour *Maurice* whether Liberal or

Covetous; is not one that can regularly be brought into any

Poem.

But he may be made use of therein, if the Fable admits such a

thing as the dissembling his avarice without changing it into libera-

lity; according to *Mr. Corneille's* practice in his *Heracles*. *Phocas*

could reap some advantage from this criminal passion of his Enemy,

and so render his cruelty against this Prince somewhat less odious.

Maurice did indeed know that God made use of this Tyrant to

punish the crime, which his avarice put him upon committing:

But this I doubt would have been against the *suitableness* of the

* Quid non mortalia
pectora cogis Auri sacra
fames? *Æn.* 3.

† Portantur avari Pygma-
lionis opes pelago. *Æn.* 1.

Manners, and the Spectators would have been offended with this Reflection. The Poet has judiciously concealed this vicious Inclination of *Maurice* without attributing the contrary to him, which would likewise have offended against what was *likely*.

One cannot then act contrary to the Qualities of the *Manners*, but we may sometimes omit them, and this is the second Reflection I would make upon the Subject.

When a Man omits the first quality, he necessarily omits all the rest; since that is the only source and foundation of them. If the *Manners* appear not at all, they will be neither *suitable*, nor *likely*, nor *even*, nor the contrary. This may be done in all the Persons that are of no note in a Poem, such as are the multitude of persons just mentioned in Battles, and several others. Because if the Poet on one side is obliged to relate no action, nor Incident without *Manners*, *Interest*, and *Passion*, that the *Narration* may be *active* and pleasant, and the minds of the Readers may attend there-to: So likewise ought he not to admit of any more Interested and passionate persons, than what he is precisely obliged to, without augmenting the number of them, that so the Memory may not be over-burdened, nor the attention distracted to no purpose. So in the *Aeneid*, we see but little of the *Manners* of *Mneſcheus*, *Cloantes*, *Messapus*, *Ufenzus*, and of so many Valiant Commanders, and other persons that have considerable Posts in the Poem.

When we make the *Manners* of a person appear but only once, we may make them *suitable* to his Dignity, Age, and Sex, &c. We may make them *like* to what common fame has published of them; but 'tis plain that there can be no *equality* of them, no more than there can be an inequality: On the contrary, it sometimes happens, that one and the same person is of an even and uneven temper at the same time. Because this Character, which in most Men resembles the Sun, whose equality consists in appearing always the same; * in others is like the Moon,

* Stultus ut Luna mutatur.

† Poet mutatur in Horas. Juveneris amata relinquere pernix.

whose equality consists in changing her Faces four times a Month: Sometimes this inequality proceeds from Age, as *Horace* has observed in † Children and Youths.

They owe this to the softness and the want of due consistency of their Brains. Objects are very easily impressed upon them, and these Images are as easily wip'd away by the impression of new Objects, or meerly by the motion of the Animal-spirits. But it happens in some persons, that their Brainpan is never closed sufficiently. This was the misfortune of *Tigellius Augustus's* Fidler. It would be ill suiting one's self to his humour, and it would offend against what is likely, only to represent him always in the same Vein. He was covetous and prodigal:

As

As proud as a King in his Dress, and clothed as meanly as a Coblin. So active and diligent as to spend whole Nights without a wink of Sleep, and so Lazy as to lie a-bed till the Afternoon for it. Lastly, if we would take * Horace's word for't, there could nothing be added to the inequality of this Man's humour. There is another inequality that is more common, but comes on more slowly, and that is the inequality of a Man in the different Ages of his Life. † In his Youth, he never thinks of heaping up wealth, but idly squanders it away. ‡ In his riper Age he gathers it in, and lays it out as honourably. * And when he comes to be Old, he seeks for and heaps up Wealth with greediness, and is so far afraid of laying it out, that he had rather live miserably than spend a Farthing upon the ordinary necessities of Life. This inequality is of little use in Poem. It seldom happens that a Poet represents one and the same person at his fifteenth, and at his sixtieth Year. 'Tis the others that are of more use in Poems. But when a Poet introduces them, he ought to give his hearers timely notice, that this inequality is the express character that he gives to his Personage.

* Nil æquale homini fuit illi, &c. Hor. Lib. I. Sat. 3.

† Juvenis utilium tardus provisor: Prodigus ævis.

‡ Ætas virilis querit opes, infervit honori.

* Senex, querit & inven- tis miser abstinet ac timet uti. Hor. Poet.

Torence has something upon this Subject in his Brothers worth taking notice of. His Demea is a testy and rough old Gentleman, one that keeps a strict hand over his Family, and thrifty to the highest degree. This was the constant course of his whole life, and he carried on this cross-grained Humour to the very end of the Play. And then he thinks of being better humour'd, more endearing and obliging and is concern'd for nothing. Here is a strange in-equality. Yet the Poet makes it very regular. Demea himself gives his Audience notice of it. Never, says he, did Man cast up the business of his Life so exactly; but still Experience, Years, and Custom will bring in some new particulars that he was not aware of; and shew his Ignorance of what he thought he knew, and after tryal makes him reject his former Opinions. This is plainly my case at present: For since my glass is almost out, I renounce this rigid Life I have always led. But why so? Because Experience shows me there's nothing like gentleness and good nature: And this truth appears plainly to all that knew me and my Brother. He always spent his time in ease and pleasure; always courteous, complaisant, spoke ill of no Man, but carress'd all; liv'd as he pleas'd, spent as he thought fit, the World bless'd him, and lov'd him too: But I that rustick, rigid, morose, pinching, bruis'd, griping fellow must needs Marry; And how have I smarted for't? I had Children too, those were new

troubles: And truly in building up their Fortunes, I have worn out my life and the best of all my days: And now I'm just marching off the Stage, the fruit of all my labour is, to be hated like a Toad. But my Brother enjoys all the pleasure of a father without the drudgery: They love him, and fly me like the Plague. Him they trust with all their secrets, dose upon him, live with him, but me they slight: They both pray for his Life, but long for my Death: Those I have brought up with the greatest labour, he has gained with a little cost, so I take all the pains, and he reaps all the pleasure. Well, well, for once we'll try what can be done, whether we can speak obligingly, and act the Gentleman too; since my Brother urges me to't, I'd willingly have my Children love and respect me too; if Gifts and Compliments will do the feat, I'll not be behind the best of them: But my Estate must go to wrack: What care I for that? Since I have one foot in the Grave already.

But I enlarge too far upon a thing so well known as this Comedy. Terence carries on the Reflection still farther, and ends it not till he ends his Play, and he is so cautious in it that he leaves his Audience nothing to guess at.

* There is another inequality of the Manners, that is occasioned by the change of a Man's Fortune, and which usually causes Men to be of a low and dejected Spirit, when they are in misery and distress, and fierce and proud when they are in power, and think they are Masters of their Fortune. A Poet may range this *suitableness*, in the Manners of persons, who are of an ordinary Vertue, and who are more inclined to be vain and proud, than truly generous; and by this conduct the Equality will not be alter'd. But if he makes a person generous, then he should alter less by the change of his Fortune. These personages should be as bold in their worst as in their best circumstances; or as modest after a Victory as after the losing of a Battle; according as the Poet orders either fierceness or gentleness to be the commanding character he gives them.

This last Character is that which Virgil bestows upon the Trojans. They appear very humble before Dido when the storm had used them so scurvily, and brought them under the mercy of the Carthaginians. * Never imagine, say

* Non ea vis animo, nec tanta superbia victis. *Æn.* 1.

they, that we are come, hither with a design to do you any harm. Vanquished persons, such as we are, have neither power nor boldness enough to undertake any thing. This would denote a baseness of Spirit, if they appeared such before their Enemies, or if they treated them with scorn and cruelty after they had conquered

Quered them. But we see 'tis true Modesty, when we hear the same Language from them after a Victory. *Aeneas* overcame the *Latins* in a hot Engagement, their Legates fell at his feet beseeching him to give them leave to burn their Dead; and he was so far from shewing the least Arrogancy, * that he even excuses his being forc'd to conquer them, and declares to them that his desire was only for peace.

* Nec veni nisi fata locum
sedemque dedissent; Nec
bellum cum gente gero.
Æn. 11.

Let us now make a Reflection upon the *Resemblance* the Manners ought to have with what common fame has published of them. This quality has this peculiar to its self that one may observe the rest in all sorts of personages, and one may likewise commit faults against them always. But there are some persons in whom there is nothing to be observed either for, or against the *Resemblance*. These personages are of two sorts. The one are such as are wholly invented, as are all those of *Comedies*, and almost all the personages of the *Epick Poem* and *Tragedy*, since in both there are but a few Names taken from History or the Fable. The second sort is of such, that are really taken from History, but whose manners are known by few, and of whom common fame has said nothing: For in this case 'tis plain, one cannot give them Inclinations, that are like or contrary to what common fame has said of them; since she has said nothing about them. So likewise *Aristotle* does not oppose Names taken from History to Names that are invented, but he opposes to them names that are well known. The same we may affirm of the *Manners*. *Dido* of the *Aeneid* is of this second sort. The Poet having feigned in his Fable such a personage as we perceive this Queen to be, the obscurity of History gave him entire license to make use of a name so little known.

This License is only for such as first make use of these Names: For those who make use of them afterwards, are obliged to keep up the Character that was at first given them, and which comes to be known this way. They can only change some circumstances that are less known, and add other new ones, which shall be compatible with what one knows already of it.

C H A P. VIII.

Of the Character of the Personages. Aristotle's Words about it.

THE Character of a person is that which is proper and peculiar to him, and distinguishes him from others. As this is discernable in the lines of a Man's face; so it is likewise to be met with in the Manners we are now discoursing of. That which I have met with in Aristotle about it, is in the same Chapter, from whence we cited that which has been already said about the Man-
*n*ers. * Since, says he, Tragedy is an imi-
tation of what is best amongst Men, we
ought to do like good Painters, who when
they give each person his proper form and
Character, and so make their Figures
like them, do likewise represent them much
fairer. In like manner should the Poet
form examples of goodness or of Hard-
heartedness, when he imitates a passionate
and Cholerick, or a soft and mild natur'd
Man, or any other such like Character.
'Tis after this manner that Homer him-
self has attributed goodness to Achilles.
Care must be taken of this, and besides
without speaking here of what is necessary,
'tis requisite to observe the series and
the Consequence that is in Poetry, where-
in we are subject to commit several
faults.

* Ἐπεὶ δὲ μίμησις ἐστὶν ἡ
 Τεχνηδὴ Βασιλεὺς, καὶ ὁ
 δὲ μίμηδ' τὰς ἀγαθὰς
 αἰσθητικὰς. Καὶ γὰρ ἐκεί-
 νου ἀποδοθέντες τὴν οὐσίαν
 μαρτυροῦντες ποιεῖν καλ-
 λας γράμματα. Οὕτω δὲ
 ὁ ποιητὴν μιμεῖσθαι καὶ
 ἡρώεα, καὶ παύσεως καὶ
 τ' ἄλλα καὶ τοιαῦτα ἔχον-
 τας ἐπὶ τοῖς ἔργοις, ἐπιμαρτυ-
 ροῦντες τὰς ἀγαθὰς καὶ
 καλὰς ἀρετὰς. Οἷον δὲ
 Ἀχιλλεὺς ἀγαθὸν καὶ ὁ
 Ὀδυσσεύς. Ταῦτα δὲ δὲ
 διαφανέει. Καὶ πρὸς τού-
 ταις, τὰς παρὰ τὰ ἔξ
 ἀνάγκης ἀκολουθούσας αἰ-
 δώσεις τῇ ποιητικῇ, καὶ
 γὰρ κατ' αὐτὰς ἐστὶν ἀμαρ-
 τάνων πολλὰς. Poet.
 c. 15.

Every one knows what affinity there is between *Painting* and *Poetry*. Horace begins his Art with it, and Aristotle likewise compares them both together in the very first Chapter of his *Poetry*. He speaks of it in several other places, and by this which we have here cited 'tis plain his judgment is, that one cannot conceive a more perfect Idea of the *Poetical Character* in the *Manners*, than by the practice of *Painters* in the *Character* which they give to their Pictures. If we would understand his Mind exactly, we cannot do it better than by enquiring in the Art, how one may draw a Portraiture perfectly like its Original, and which at the same time should be finer? I'll venture to give my thoughts about it.

Painters in their Personages have three sorts of Subjects. Either they

they represent particular Persons to the Life, such as *Augustus*, young *Marcellus*, *Virgil*, *Seneca*, *Paulinus*, &c. Or they represent Dignities and such like Characters, as a King, a Philosopher, a Minister of State, a Poet, a Varlet, a Beggar, &c. Or lastly, they represent a Passion, such as Anger, Joy, Discontent, Cruelty, &c.

We may add that Painters and Poets, of an elevated Fancy, are more for drawing Kings, Princes, and things of State and Grandure: And that the less noble Genius of others, puts them upon the Choice of Valets, Drunkards, and despicable Persons. *Aristotle* attributes the Variety of *Dramatick Poems* and the Invention of *Tragedy* and *Comedy* to the diversity of Genius's. The first would doubtless make finer Personages, than the last. But this makes no difference as to the exact likeness of the Characters. Both the one, and the other may meet with equal success as well in the baseness and deformity of *Irus* and *Thersites*, as in the Majesty and bon mien of *Agamemnon* and *Paris*.

But we cannot here make any use of this difference, and this Interpretation, since *Aristotle* speaks only of Poems, and famous Persons: And we can without quitting *Tragedy* and the *Epopée* meet with this difference of more or less comeliness in an exact likeness.

Two things are considerable in the Persons one would paint. The first are the Features which we may call *Characteristical*: Such are the natural Wrinkles of the Face, the Proportion of each part, the colour of the Eyes and Hair, the shape of the Nose, the thickness of the Lips, the wideness of the Mouth, and other such like properties. This is what should properly and chiefly fix the Imagination, and give it the Idea of the person we would represent. 'Tis absolutely necessary that these Features be observ'd in the Copy, to make it more like the Original; and 'tis of these that the expression of *Aristotle* is to be understood [*Giving to each person the Character that is proper to him.*] These *Characteristical Features* are so far fix'd, in comparison to the rest, that they continue the same even in the change of Ages and Sexes; and they easily discover the Fathers by the countenance of their Children, and the Mothers by that of their Sons.

The second thing is a great deal less permanent, and less affix'd to its Subject, and consequently leaves a Painter more to his own liberty. 'Tis the colour of the Flesh, the plumpness, and several other things, that augment or diminish the Beauty of a Person without changing the Features, and the proportion of his Countenance. There are some, whom a pale colour would better become than a fairer Complexion; or who would be much more taking were they made a little Fatter, or a little Leaner. There needs only a slight distemper, a disturbance, or a few Days of Diversion to produce these Alterations. So that a skilful Painter will consider a person under different States, and with those various Motions which may

may naturally happen to him. And having observ'd what becomes him best, he will paint him in some Action or other, wherein he shall be a little mov'd with fear or anger, according as he has a mind to make him more pale or more lively than the Original: Or else he will give him a smiling Countenance, if he perceives the Person has some defect which a smile would conceal, &c. After this manner, without altering the natural Resemblance, Painters represent Persons more comely than they are.

These two, whereof one makes the Picture like to, and the other makes it more comely than the Original, which we have applied to particular Persons, may likewise be applied to whole Orders of Men according to their Dignities, Ages, Passions, and other Habitudes. The Throne, Diadem, Scepter, and Majesty make up the Character of a King. But there are some Persons, and Faces that carry a great deal more Majesty in them than others, and on whom a Crown fits a great deal better. Nature has made no old Man but what carries in his Countenance the Character of his Age: But she has made some Venerable and August, and others Contemptible and Disdainful. There are some Persons whom Anger renders more comely, tho' commonly this Passion very much disfigures the Countenance.

A Painter then in the various Countenances he sees, being stock'd with so many different Subjects which may serve him as a ground Work to keep up the Characters we have been discoursing of; if he is a good Painter, he will not be contented with a Sceptre and a Crown, with Wrinkles and gray Hairs, and with the Features that in general are proper to an incens'd Person: But he will study upon divers Complexions, those that under these Characters will be the most taking, and will make choice of those whom Nature has made Venerable and August, and in whom even without a Crown, one may discern something of Majesty and Royalty.

There is another way of embellishing a Character, and that is by deducing the agreeableness of it from the very Essence and Properties of the Character it self. Anger makes Men look pale or red; it makes them gnash their Teeth, fall foul upon every thing they meet with, tear themselves, and express such Motions and Postures, as are strange, terrible, and extravagant. But 'tis not always attended with these effects. It has some more moderate ones: And 'tis at the Painters choice to make use of those which he pleases, and to reject the more violent Ones, if his design requires them not, and to express the most moving, the most pleasant, and the less irregular Ones.

His liberty is sometimes more, sometimes less. When he represents one single Personage, and invents the Design as he pleases, then all depends upon him, and if he succeeds not, he is to blame. But if one should require a story of him, and determine the persons for him, then he will be often perplex'd in a great many things by the
very

very Essence of his Subject, which permits him not to make use of certain Beauties, which would be very advantageous to him. A King preserves his gravity best in a moderate Passion, but *Agamemnon* is not capable of this moderation in the Sacrifice of *Iphigenia*. The Beauty of *Helen* and that of *Paris* would be more conspicuous by Day-light, than by Torch-light, but yet 'tis necessary that this Princess should be carry'd off in the Night. *Europa*, smiling amidst the Nymphs and Flowers, would be more comely: But would any one represent her so when carry'd into the midst of the Sea upon a Bull. A Painter might come off with success in the ravishing of *Helen*, if one would give him liberty to make choice of a Model; he would likewise succeed in the portraiture of a person, that he draws to the Life, if he invents the Shadows, the Posture, and the Action thereof: And he would come off but pitifully, were he oblig'd to joyn these two things together, and to give to *Helen*, when ravish'd, the Countenance of a person, that he had painted with success in a contrary Action.

The constraint is still greater, if one should represent several Actions of one and the same Story, and if one should paint the carrying off of *Europa* in four Tables. For the same Features of one single person will serve as a foundation of moderate Joy, a dreadful Fright, a mortal Confusion, and a Miraculous and pleasant Surprise.

The great Poems are of this last sort. The several *Episodes*, wherein we see the same person Act, are as so many Tables, wherein the same Character of one single Countenance ought to serve as a foundation to the different Characters of opposite Passions. *Achilles* is represented at the Council Board, in the Fight; and at the Funeral Solemnities of his Friend. The Poet has not made his Hero sage and prudent in This first Table; he has not made him proud in the Ceremonies and Religion of the last; that so he might be less angry and passionate than in the Battle. This variety of Characters would have made three *Achilles's*, and would have had something of the Ignorance of a Painter, who willing to paint *Achilles* in these three different Adventures, would chuse for his model three Countenances that had no relation to each other, and would represent one of them entire in each Table. But *Homer* at the Council Board gives *Agamemnon* occasion to provoke *Achilles*, who is presently transported with anger against him, and who begins to revenge himself by affronting and venting seditious Reproaches against him. And in the Funeral of *Patroclus*, the Ceremony that is most visible is the cruelty which *Achilles* shews to the body of the Brave and unhappy *Hector*, which he ties by the heels to his Chariot, and for twelve Days together inhumanely drags about the Tomb of his Friend. Thus is *Achilles* always the same, and is no less Cholerick and Revengeful at the Council Board, and the Funeral Solemnities, than in War and Battle. The

The Poet then, in the Constitution of his Fable, ought to mind what he is oblig'd to, and what *Character* it requires: He will afterwards examine all its Parts, and all the *Episodes* it presents to him. He will see which of them he can apply to his *Character*, or to

† Hoc amet, hoc spernat
promissi carminis auctor.
Hv. Pæt.

which he can apply it; † by this means making choice of those that are for his turn, and rejecting the others, (as *Homer* has done in the Amours of *Achilles* and *Briseis*, with

which the very Essence of his Fable furnish'd him.) Thus having entirely discover'd all the Lineaments of his *Character* that are indispensably annex'd to the very Essence of his Fable, and to his Subject, he is oblig'd to keep to them as their proper Form, wherein does essentially consist the Resemblance of his Fable to the probable Action which he would Imitate; let it be in the Persons, or in the Dignities, or in the Passions, or any other things that are capable of a *Character*. This is the first thing a Poet is oblig'd to. The second is to examine all the other Circumstances of his *Character*, which the Essence of his Fable does not make necessary, and which are as the Colours of a more or less paleness and redness, the complexion whereof may naturally change. He will discover those that are most capable of rendring his *Character* pleasant, and his Personages good, even in a moral Sense, and he will make use of them, and not of the others. 'Tis by this means that without altering the Resemblance, and the Justness of the *Character* a good Poet, like a good Painter, will make his Personages better, and a sorry Poet like a sorry Painter will make them worse than they are. 'Tis thus that *Homer* himself has made his *Achilles* good as we have observ'd.

One may understand and interpret the Text of *Aristotle* in a sense different from that which I propos'd in the beginning of the Chapter: But it will still suit with the Doctrine I have drawn from thence. The other Interpretation is this, *When a Poet imitates a passionate Man, or a mild and good humour'd Person, or any other Character, he ought rather to propose to himself Models of Goodness, than of Hard-heartedness, &c.*

C H A P. IX.

Of the Characters of Achilles, Ulysses,
and Æneas.

ARISTOTLE proposes *Homer's Achilles* to us, - to teach us the way of making the imitated Personage like the Original which we propose to our selves; in such a manner that this *Resemblance*, which may be attended with Deformity and Vice, or Beauty and Virtue, have that which is the most perfect of these Qualities. We have already taken notice that the *Resemblance* consists in this Part of the *Character* which is proper and necessary to the Fable, and which the Subject obliges indispensably to be observ'd; and that the Beauty or the Goodness *Aristotle* speaks of, and which he distinguishes from the *Resemblance*, consists in the Circumstances of the *Character*, which are not necessarily contain'd in the Essence of the Fable. This is what we are more fully to discover in the Practice of *Homer* and his *Iliad*, to which *Aristotle* refers us, that so we may instruct our selves, where he himself learn'd his Instructions.

We have sufficiently made it appear, that *Achilles* ought to be passionate, unjust, and inexorable. The Fable necessarily requires this; 'tis that renders his Manners *Bad*, and so unworthy a Man of Honour. But they have nothing in them that is irregular, or contrary to the Precepts of *Aristotle*, since he requires Goodness only in the Circumstances, where the Poet is at his liberty, and since he blames Vice only when 'tis not necessary. So that this is that, which I call Part of the *Character* which renders *Achilles* like to the Idea, which the Poet form'd of him, when he laid down the first Model of his Fable.

But the *Fable* leaves the Poet to chuse the Circumstances which may either raise and embellish the *Character*, or render it more deform'd and odious. *Achilles* that is passionate, inexorable, and unjust, might be likewise fearful, and cowardly, and have reveng'd himself by betraying his party. He might have given some secret Intelligence to his Enemies, he might have receiv'd them into his Quarters, or have injur'd his Allies by any other wicked Practices, which might have occasion'd a great deal of mischief to have fallen upon the *Greeks*, *Agamemnon*, and himself, and which might have been no hindrance to his Reconciliation. For suppose the *Greeks* without *Achilles* were stronger than the *Trojans*, in this case their disadvantage and losses would only have happen'd by the Treachery of
this

this Hero. And the Treachery ending with this Reconciliation the Valour of the *Greeks* might have got them the Victory. The Fable would not have been less just, nor have had less of the Moral and Instructions than that it at present contains.

Thus the Essence and the Justness of the Fable leaves the Poet at his full liberty to make choice either of the Valour or the Cowardice of *Achilles*, for to degrade or raise his Character; and 'tis to this choice, that the Precept of *Aristotle* refers, when he orders Poets to imitate good Painters, who, always preserving whatever the Character has that is necessary or proper to the Subject, raise it by all the Embellishments 'tis capable of. If *Homer* had chose to have made his Hero cowardly, rather than Valiant, he would have offended against what *Aristotle* orders here, and elsewhere, viz. Never to represent a Personage that is wicked without necessity forces one to it. But this great Poets practice is not thus. As unjust, and as passionate as the Anger of his Hero was, and tho' 'twas so pernicious to his Allies, and to *Patroclus* himself yet he has done nothing herein, but what is necessary. He has observ'd in this Character what his Fable indispensibly oblig'd him to. But for as much as it has left him at his liberty therein, he has made use of it so far to the Advantage of his Hero, that he has almost conceal'd his great Vices by the darling show of a miraculous Valour which has deceiv'd so many Persons.

This Goodness may be likewise added to the difference we put between the *Epick Fable*, and those of *Æsop*, for 'tis neither necessary nor congruous in these last. The Heroes there may be intirely vicious.

'Tis easier to discover what Goodness there is in the Characters of *Ulysses*, and *Aeneas*, since the very Essence of the Fable requires Goodness and Virtue: But yet 'tis still necessary to know the practice of our Poets in the Characters they have given them.

The Fable of the *Odysseis* is all for the conduct of a State, and for Policy. Therefore the Quality it requires is *Prudence*; but this Virtue is of too large an extent for the simplicity which a just and precise Character requires; it is requisite it should be limited. The great Art of Kings is the Mystery of *Disimulation*. 'Tis well known that *Lewis* the eleventh for the Instruction of his Son, reduc'd all the *Latin Language* to these words only, viz. *Qui nescit dissimulare nescit regnare*. 'Twas likewise by this practice that *Saul* began his Reign, when he was elected, and then full of the Spirit of God. The first thing we read of him in holy Writ is * that he made as if he did not hear the words, which seditious People spoke against him.

* Ille vero dissimulabat se audire. Reg. lib. 1.

This then is the Character which the Greek Poet gives his *Ulysses* in the Proposition of his Poem, he calls him *αἰεὶ καλὸς ἄνθρωπος*; to denote

denote this prudent dissimulation, which disguised him so many ways, and put him upon taking so many Shapes.

Without mentioning any thing of *Circe* who stay'd him with her a whole Year, and who was famous for the transformations she knew to make with all sorts of persons: The Reader finds him at first with *Calypso*, the Daughter of wise *Atlas*, who bore up the vast Pillars that reach'd from Earth to Heaven, and whose knowledge penetrated into the depths of the unfathomable Ocean: That is to say, who was ignorant of nothing that was either in Heaven, Earth or Sea. And as the first product and principal part of so high, so solid, and so profound a knowledge was to know how to conceal ones self; This wise Man call'd his Daughter by a name that signified a † *Secret*. The

* Ἀτλαντὶς Στήληται ἑλ-
κόντες. ὅτι διὰ τούτων Πά-
ντος, βίβλια διδόν. ἔχει δὲ
τι αἰώνας αὐτὸς Μακρὰ,
ἡ γὰρ τὰς τι αὐτὸς ἀμ-
φὶς ἔχει. Odyss. lib. 1.

Poet makes his Hero, which he design'd for † *Καλῶπτον* a Politician, to stay seven whole Years with this Nymph. She taught him so well, that afterwards he lost no opportunity of putting her Lessons in practice: For he does nothing without a disguise. At his parting from *Ogyges*, he is cast upon the Isle of *Phæaca*: As kind as his reception was, yet he stays till the Night before he went off, ere he would discover himself. From thence he goes to *Ithaca*. The first adventure that happens to him there was with *Minerva* the most prudent among the Deities, as *Ulysses* was the most prudent among Men.

* She her self says thus much in this very passage. Nor did they fail to disguise themselves.

* Εἰδότες ἀμφοὶ Κέρδι
ἐπεὶ οὐ θεῶν δὲ δέον
ἀπαύτων Βουλῇ καὶ μυσίῳ
ἔχον δὲ ἐν πᾶσι θεοῖσιν. Μά-
τι τι κλέπτει καὶ κέρδιον.
Od. 1. 13.

Menerva takes upon her the shape of a Shepherd, and *Ulysses* tells her he was oblig'd to fly from *Crete*, because he had Murder'd the Son of King *Idomeneus*. The Goddess discovers her self first, and commends him for that these Artifices were so easie, and so natural to him, as if they had been born with him. Afterwards the Hero under the form of a Beggar deceives first of all *Eumæus*, then his Son, and last of all his Wife, and every body else, till he had found an opportunity, of punishing his Enemies, to whom he discover'd not himself till he kill'd them, that is the last Night: After his discovering himself in his Palace, he goes the next Day to deceive his Father, appearing at first under a borrow'd Name; before he would give him joy of his Return Thus he takes upon him all Manner of Shapes, and dissembles to the very last. The Poet joyns to this Character a * valour and a constancy which renders him Invincible in the most daring and desperate Adventures.

* Aspera multa Pertulit ad-
versis rerum immensabilis
undis. Hor. ad Lir.

The Fable of the *Aeneid* is quite different from the two Greek ones. The Poets design was to introduce among the *Romans* a new sort of Government, and a new Master. 'Twas requisite then that this new Master should have all the Qualities, which the Founder of a State ought to have, and all the Virtues which make a Prince belov'd.

Diffimulation is a wrong Method. We bear but little love to a Man we distrust, and those who love *Ulysses*, love him only after they had had a long Experience of his Goodness, and of the good will his Father bore towards them. But the Hero of *Virgil* had only new Subjects as *Augustus Caesar* has, and by the way, I shall here say, that the Latin Poet was more straitned in this than *Homer*, and that he was like to those Painters, who ought to suit their Stories to the Model of a countenance we have prescrib'd them. *Aeneas* then ought only to give his Subjects signs of sincerity and frankness. He could not have the Character of *Achilles*. The violences of *Achilles* were entirely opposite to the design of the *Aeneid*; and the Poet has judiciously assign'd them to *Turnus* and *Mezentius*, which he opposes to his Hero. He was therefore oblig'd to a Character that is opposite to that, as we have often and often said.

So that the Character of *Achilles* is the inexorable Anger of a revengeful, unjust, and valiant Prince; That of *Ulysses* is the wise, and prudent diffimulation of a valiant King, whose Constancy nothing could shock. And that of *Aeneas* is a mild, and good-natur'd Piety, upheld as the two others by a valour and an unshaken Courage.

C H A P. X.

The Character of the other Personages.

ALL the persons in a Picture do not appear in an equal Degree. The principal Personage must always appear above all the rest and be view'd at his full Length, as far as Art and Perspective will admit. Some others appear almost as much. There are others that are half hid, or which appear more or less, and there are some likewise which serve only to represent a great number of persons, whose extream Parts are the only things we can distinguish, and which shew that there is some body there. Lastly, some are very near and are seen distinctly, and others are at such a distance as confounds the Features, and the very members themselves, and gives them rather the colour of the Air than their own proper Hue. As for those that are

are near, a considerable part whereof we see, 'tis necessary that they should wear either in their Countenance, or their Posture the Character that is proper to them, and make it appear what Interest they have in the Action which is represented. As for the rest the less is seen of them, the less is one likewise oblig'd to make them known.

The case is just the same in the *Epopea*. The Poet leaves the greatest part of his Actors in obscurity, and at a distance, but beside his Hero, to whom he has a particular regard, there are likewise several others, whose Character must be set off in a greater or less light, according to the Interest he makes them have. following in this the Rules which we have apply'd to the Hero. We will take notice of the Differences by what follows.

Dido is the chief Personage which the Poet presents us with, and the most considerable in the first Part of the *Aeneid*, since 'tis she that makes the Intrigue or Plot thereof. She is the Foundress of *Carthage*, as *Aeneas* is the Founder of *Rome*, and she represents the obstacle which this Republick laid in the way of the *Roman* Victories, which were to raise that State to be Mistress of the World. So then, as *Aeneas* bore the Character of *Rome*, so should *Dido* of *Carthage*. Therefore she is Passionate, Bold, Daring, Ambitious, Violent, Perfidious: And all these Qualities are carry'd on by a Craftiness which is the very Soul and Character of her. 'Tis by her Craftiness that she succeeded so well in her great Undertakings, in revenging her Husband, punishing her Brother, and deceiving of King *Iarbas*. 'Tis by these very wiles she would stop *Aeneas*'s Journey, and being not able to compass that, deceives her very Sister who was her only Confident.

This Character is vicious and odious. *Virgil* was oblig'd to it by the very nature of his Fable. But in the Liberty it has given him, he has taken care according to *Aristotle*'s Maxim, to give this Character all the softness that is proper to his Subject; and to raise it by all the Beauties he found it capable of receiving. *Dido* does not make use of the wickedness of her temper, but only to stay *Aeneas* at *Carthage*: She is inclin'd thereto by the violence of a Passion that renders this Action less odious, and which puts the Readers upon lamenting and pitying the Torments she endures, and the † Death she condemn'd her self to. Elsewhere he makes her Exercise her craftiness only upon Noble, Lawful, and glorious Occasions. * He gives her Qualities truly Royal. She is Magnificent, Courteous, and has a great esteem for Virtue. All this is to be observ'd in that obliging way whereby she entertain'd the *Trojans* before ever she had seen *Aeneas*.

† Quin morere ut merita
ea. *En.* 4.

* Sunt hic sua præmia laudi.
En. 1.

In the second Part of the Poem there are a great many more interested persons than in the first. *Latinus* is a very good and pious Prince, but old and without Son. This gives the Queen an occasion of disobeying his orders, and *Turnus* a desire of being his Son-in-Law in spite of him, and of forcing the good old Man to proclaim War against *Aeneas*, and of making use of his Subjects, his Arms, and his Authority. This default of Authority is natural and ordinary among Kings that have no Heirs.

Amata pretends to have a kind of Right of disposing of her Daughter. She is strangely affected for her Kinsman *Turnus*. She was so obstinately bent upon having him for her Son-in-Law, that she had rather die than change her Resolution. This obstinacy of the Woman put her upon taking all manner of Shapes, keeps up her Anger and her Violence, and is the principal Character the Poet gives her.

† Alius Latio jam partus
Achilles. *Æn.* 6.

would admit. 'Tis

* Arma mens fremit, arma
thoro testisque requirit,
Sævit amor ferri, &
scelerata infania belli. *Æn.* 7.

Anger, the most prevailing of all his Passions. This is the first Idea our Poet gives of him and which he always keeps up very carefully. He is less of a Soldier, and more of a General than *Achilles*. But

† Et si continuo victorem
ea cura subisset, Rumpere
claustra manu, sociosque
immittere portis: Ultimus
ille dies bello gentique fuisset.
Sed furor ardentem
cædisque infana cupido Egit
in advertos. *Æn.* 9.

that Anger is his principal Character. He was so full of the Idea of *Achilles*, and so far master of his Spirit, that he brags of being like him. * Go, says he to *Pandarus*, when he kill'd him, Go tell Priam thou hast met with a second Achilles here. The Poet makes use of these artifices to shew the Readers what sort of humour *Turnus* was of.

The Character of this Hero has likewise this injustice of *Achilles*, in that, from his own particular Quarrel he raises a general War, renders his Anger pernicious to both Parties, and more to his own than

The Character of *Turnus* is the same with that of † *Achilles* as far as the alteration of the Design, and the Difference of the Fable, a young Man, furious, and passionate for a Damsel that a Rival would rob him of. * His mind is all upon Arms and War without troubling his head whether it be just, or whether the want of Justice, and the contrary order of the Gods make it criminal and impious. He suffers himself to be transported with

this General in Office sometimes forgot himself to act the part of a private Soldier. † Had it not been for this, he might have put an end to the War the very second Day, when breaking into the Entrenchments of *Aeneas*, which he besieg'd, his fury made him forget to keep the passage open for his own Men, as he might easily have done. So far is it true that Anger is his principal Character. He was so full of the Idea of *Achilles*, and so far master of his Spirit, that he brags of being like him. * Go, says he to *Pandarus*, when he kill'd him, Go tell Priam thou hast met with a second Achilles here. The Poet makes use of these artifices to shew the Readers what sort of humour *Turnus* was of.

than to that of the Enemy, and exposes so many thousand Innocents for his single Interest. The blackness of this *Character* is shaded, as the vices of *Achilles*, by the Lustre of a wonderful courage.

This may suffice without speaking of the other Personages, one may apply to them whatever we have said here concerning the *Manners* and the *Character*.

CHAP. XI.

What the Character is.

From what has been said we may infer, that in the *Epick Poem* the *Character* is not properly any particular Vertue or Quality, but a composition of several, which are mix'd together in a different degree with the Ornaments and Beauty 'tis capable of observing, the necessity of the Fable, and the unity of the Action.

All the Qualities that go toward the making this composition cannot be all of the same class, nor be equal among themselves. Because one carrying the Hero upon one Encounter, and another upon another Encounter, the *Character* will seem varied, and the Poem as well as the Hero will look like a Body animated with several Souls. 'Tis requisite then there should be one commanding Quality to Rule the rest, and be the Soul of them, and that this appear throughout. After the same manner as a Hero being painted in divers Fables ought to be discern'd in all, and to have the same Features in his Countenance, let his Postures and his Passions be never so different. This commanding Quality in *Achilles* is his *Anger*, in *Ulysses* the *Art of Dissimulation*, and in *Aeneas* *Meekness*. Each of these may by way of Eminence be styl'd the *Character* in these Heroes.

But these *Characters* cannot be alone. 'Tis absolutely necessary that some other should give them a lustre and embellish them, as far as they are capable: Either by hiding the defects that are therein by some noble and shining Qualities, as the Poet has done the *Anger* of *Achilles*, by shading it with an extraordinary Valour; or making them entirely of the nature of a true and solid Vertue, as is to be observ'd in the two others. The *Dissimulation* of *Ulysses* is a part of his prudence, and the *Meekness* of *Aeneas* is wholly employ'd in submitting the will of this Hero to the Gods. For the making up this Union our Poets have joyn'd together such Qualities as are by nature the most compatible. Valour with *Anger*, Piety with *Goodness*, and Prudence with *Dissimulation*. This last Union was necessary for the Goodness of *Ulysses*, for without that his *Dissimulation* might have degenerated into wickedness and knavery.

Besides, the Fable requir'd Prudence in *Ulysses*, and Piety in *Aeneas*, as we before observ'd. In this the Poets were not left to their choice. But *Homer* might have made *Achilles* not valiant. The Cowardice of this Hero would have abated nothing of the justness of his Fable. So that 'tis the necessity he lay under of adorning his Character, and of not making *Achilles* vicious, where there was no need for it, that oblig'd him to give him the Title of *Valiant*.

The Valour then as well as the Prudence, and the Piety in the other two Poems, which are the secondary Qualities we have been speaking of make up the Goodness of each Hero, and communicate this same Goodness to the whole Poem. But if on the one hand, this secondary Quality is an ornament to the first, on the other it receives such a determination from it, as makes its extent less, but withall more just; a Hero may be endu'd with a peaceful, generous, and *Roman* Valour, which is ready to pardon injuries upon submission. Such is the Valour of *Aeneas*. He may likewise be endued with a Cholerick, Cruel, Brutish, and Inexorable Valour which never pardons, and had rather its Vengeance should fall upon its Friends, than spare one single Enemy, and this is the Valour and Character of *Achilles*.

But should we consider these two Qualities a-part, for to know which of them deserves chiefly to be styl'd the Character, we shall presently exclude Valour, since 'tis neither essential to the Fable, nor does *Achilles* make any shew of it, but keeps it without Action for above half the Poem: Nor lastly does the Poet sing it. But he sings the Anger, and this Anger is necessary to the Fable, at least it is predominant as much during the absence of *Achilles*, as when he is reunited to the *Grecians* and fights in Person. So Prudence is not the principal part of the Character of *Ulysses*, since the Poet does not sing a prudent Man, but a Man that changes himself into all sorts of forms. We may likewise say, that the Meekness of *Aeneas* is his chief Quality, tho' the word *Pius* which the Poet makes use of, signifies equally Meekness and Piety.

To these two Qualities must a third be joyned to support them, and carry on the Character with greater force. A Prince will be to no purpose good and pious, or prudent and dissembling, if he is not Valiant and Brave: He will meet with many invincible Difficulties. Without Valour *Aeneas* would have been routed by *Turnus*, and *Ulysses* would have fainted under a hundred hardships. Valour then is necessary to produce great Designs, and to put them in Execution. But there is no need to dwell longer on this Subject. The consequences thereof are very clear.

We conclude then, that the Character of the Hero in the *Epic Poem*, is compounded of three sorts of Qualities. Those of the first sort are necessary and essential to the Fable. That of the second are the Ornaments of it. Valour which supports both makes the third

third sort. The first, which is the Principal, must be some Universal Quality, such as should be met with in all sorts of Occasions, and Encounters, and such as should make the Hero known throughout.

In the *Character* of the other Personages there is likewise some Composition, for one single Quality can never exactly distinguish one Person from others, unless it be determin'd by some other that may render it proper and singular. But 'tis not necessary that Valour or any other Noble Inclination, should be admitted into these lesser *Characters*. I see nothing that's Noble or Good in *Thersites*, *Amata*, or in that number of dull Souls in the *Odyssey*, and without mentioning these last, or *Drances* in whom the Poets have not express'd the least Valour. The Women that are introduced into Poems, do manifestly exclude the necessity of this Warlike Quality.

C H A P. XII.

Of the Unity of the Character in the Hero.

THE exactness of our Poets presents us with an *Unity* in the *Character*, which we cannot pass by without a Reflection. It is observ'd in the Conduct of the Hero in particular, and in that of the whole Poem; and I fancy one might apply to both the first Rule of *Horace*, which order that every thing be reduc'd to a *Simplicity* and *Unity*. It seems indeed, as if the *Character* were as much the Life and Soul of the Hero, and the whole Action, as the Fable is of the Poem, and consequently it seems to require as exact an *Unity*. We will begin with the Hero's *Character*. We have already hinted at this *Unity of the Character* in the Personages, when we said that the *Manners* ought to be *even* or *equal*. If we would suppose the *Equality* of the *Manners*, and the *Unity* of the *Character* to be one and the same thing, then in treating of this point under the Title of the *Equality of the Manners*, I had forgot what I have here added under this Head of the *Unity of the Character*. I said there, that the *Equality* consisted in giving no one Person such Sentiments as were contrary to one another. But I add here, that this is not sufficient for the *Unity of the Character*, and that 'tis moreover necessary, that the same Spirit appear in all sorts of Encounters, whether similar, contrary, or others.

Thus *Aeneas* for instance, acting with a great deal of Piety and Mildness in the first part of his Poem, which requires no other *Character*,

rafter, and afterwards making a great shew of an Heroical Valour in the Wars of the second part, but without any appearance either of a hard or a soft Disposition, would doubtless be far from offending against what we have laid down about the Equality of the Manners: But yet there would be no Simplicity or Unity in this Character. So that besides the Qualities, that claim their particular place upon different occasions, there must be one appearing throughout which Commands over all the rest. Without this we may affirm 'tis no Character. And this is what would be that Poet's Fate, that would give his Hero the Piety of *Aeneas*, and the Valour of *Achilles*, without reflecting on the mild Temper of the one, or the hard Nature of the other.

Or to speak more properly, this Poet could by no means give his Hero the Qualities of the two other Hero's. There is a great deal of difference between a Face in General, and the Face of *Aeneas* in Particular, between a Fore-head, a Nose, a Mouth, and an Eye in General, and the Fore head, Eyes, Nose, and Mouth of *Achilles*. There is likewise a great deal of difference between Valour in General, and the Valour of *Achilles*, and between Piety in General, and the Piety of *Aeneas*. This is evident from the Thoughts and the Practice of the Latin Poet. Had he taken *Achilles* for a Model of Valour, and had he thought that *Homer* had carry'd this Quality to the highest pitch, it could go, certainly he would have made his *Aeneas* a great deal more like the Greek Hero, than he has *Turnus*, since he makes him a great deal more Valiant than *Turnus*, and he would never have fail'd giving this Idea to his Readers, and telling them, that *Aeneas* is another *Achilles*. How comes it to pass that he never does this? And on the contrary, gives this Quality to *Turnus* several times: 'Tis doubtless, because he saw well enough, that 'tis by the Character one Man resembles another, and that Valour in General is not the Character of *Achilles*: That to be more Valiant as *Aeneas*, or less Valiant as *Turnus*, 'tis not requir'd that one should have more or less of the Character of this Grecian Hero: But that one shall resemble him the more, the more one is endu'd with a Cholerick, Violent, and unjust Valour, as *Turnus* was, and that on the contrary, one shall have a Character opposite to that of *Achilles*, tho' one be never so Valiant, when one is Reasonab'e, Mild, and Moderate.

One may then make a Hero as Valiant as *Achilles*, as Pious as *Aeneas*, and if one please, as Prudent as *Ulysses*. But 'tis a meer Chimæra to imagine a Hero that has the Valour of *Achilles*, the Piety of *Aeneas*, and the Prudence of *Ulysses* at one and the same time. This Vision might happen to an Author who would suit the Character of a Hero to whatever each part of the Action does naturally require, without regarding the Essence of the Fable, and the Unity of the Character in the same Person upon all sorts of occasions.

This

This Hero would be the mildest, best natur'd Prince in the World, and the most Cholerick, hard Hearted, and Implacable Creature imaginable, contrary to *Horace's* Prohibition in the Case. He would be extreamly tender as *Aeneas*, extreamly violent as *Achilles*, and would have the Indifference of *Ulysses* that is incapable of the two extreams; 'twould be in vain for the Poet to call this Personage by the same Name throughout. The Hero of the Temple, and the Cabinet, would not be the Hero of the Field.

But can there be no Moderation nor Accommodation made by giving a Hero as much Valour, Prudence, and Piety, as an honest Man is capable of, and by retrenching from each of these Qualities, whatever it has defective, and contrary to the two others? To judge how far this practice is allowable, we need only reflect on the effects it would produce in several Poems, whose Authors were of the mind that the chief Character of any Hero, is that of an honest Man. They would be alike in all these pieces, we should see them all Valiant in Battel, Prudent in Counsel, Pious in the Acts of Religion, Courteous, Civil, Magnificent, and lastly, endu'd with all the prodigious Vertues, the best Poet could invent. All this would be independant from the Action, and the Subject of the Poem. And upon seeing each Hero separated from the rest of the Work, we should not easily guess to what Action, and to what Poem the Hero does belong. So that we should see that none of these would have a Character, since the Character is that which makes a Person discernable, and which distinguishes it from all others.

Nor would this false Resemblance be only among the Hero's, but likewise among the other Personages, which one were willing to represent as honest Men. They would not differ from the Hero himself, but as *Plus* and *Mus*. He would be a more Honest, more Valiant, and more Prudent Man, &c.

Homer and *Virgil* furnish us with quite different Examples. *Achilles*, *Ulysses*, and *Aeneas* have nothing in common, and differ as much among themselves as the three Poems, and the three Actions, of which they are the Hero's. They have each of them a Character which admirably distinguishes them from others, and whose Unity and Simplicity is so exact, and so uniform, as to make them appear the same upon all occasions. *Homer* has so prepar'd his Fables, that 'twas easie for him to preserve this Unity in the principal parts. *Virgil* has done the contrary. His first part is like the Action of the *Odyssey*, whose Character is Coolness, Disimulation, and Prudence. The second is like the *Iliad*, full of the Horrors of War, which naturally draw along with them Anger and Cruelty, and yet he has made Mildness and the softest Passions predominant in both parts. *Aeneas* is as Meek and Pious when he kills *Lausus* in the heat of Battel, as he is, in the Sports and the Peaceable and Religious Combats, which he Celebrated in Honour of his Father *Anchises*.

He

He is as Modest when his Vanquish'd Enemies fell at his Feet to Implore his Pardon, as when being himself toss'd about by a Storm, and cast upon a strange Countrey, he was forc'd to Implore the Favour of *Dido*.

C H A P. XIII.

The Unity of the Character in the Poem.

IF the *Unity* of the *Character* seems hard to be made in the Person of *Aeneas*, because this Hero is in so many different Encounters, which naturally require opposite *Characters*; this difficulty is still greater in the Series of the whole Poem, since beside this variety of Actions, the Poet introduces Personages whose Humours are contrary to that of the Hero. *Dido* is Violent and Passionate, *Turnus*, *Amata*, and *Mezentius*, who are the secondary Hero's, and who do all that is done on their side, are as opposite to *Aeneas* in their *Characters* as in their *Interests*. And yet to maintain the *Unity of the Character* in the Poem, 'tis requisite, that these opposite *Characters* should centre in the *Character* of the Hero, and so submit thereto, that *It* alone should be predominant in both the Parties, as the Author of the *Iliad* makes *Anger* to be the Commanding Passion as well in the City of *Troy*, as in the *Grecian Camp*.

All Poets have not been so circumspect. We see *Claudian's* Genius is not rais'd to this Justness and Accurateness, nor has he made so exact proportions. The furious and terrible *Character* of *Pluto* and the *Furies*, and all the Horror of *Hell* it self is presently Metamorphos'd into the *Character* and the Pleasure of the *Graces*, the *Goddeesses*, the gilt Palaces, and the Flowery Meads. All this Joy does again give way to the Sorrows, and Complaints of a Mother for the loss of a Daughter. This Author has no Idea of his whole Work. When he Composes one part of it, he never thinks on any thing else. He has begun with the Infernal Deities, and in all this beginning, one can see nothing but the *Furies* they are capable of. Afterwards he speaks of the Visit which *Venus*, *Diana*, and *Minerva* make to young *Proserpine*, and this is wholly taken up with Joys and Pleasures. Lastly, he describes the fear and sorrow of *Ceres*, and then he thinks on no other Passion, and he suits himself so well to each thing he Treats on, independantly from the rest of the Poem, that in his three Books he has as many different, principal, and reigning *Characters* as there are in the three score Books of our three Poems. There we see *Anger*, *Disimulation*, and *Meekness* reigning each of them apart and singly in the *Iliad*, in the *Odysseis*, and

in the *Æneid*. And in the three Books of the *Rape of Proserpine*, we meet with Terror, Joy, and Sadness. This is an instance of an Error that corrupts the *Unity of the Character in the Poem*.

The Practice of our Poets is quite otherwise. They alter not the Soul when they form different Members to the same Body. They know that the Eye, which is the most delicate part, and the Hand, which is the most laborious and hardy, have yet the same Spirit in the same Person. So that they mind less the particular incidents of their Action, and the Humour of each Personage, than they do the general *Character of the Fable*.

For this purpose, *Virgil* lays no constraint upon the *Character* of the Hero which ought to be predominant throughout. He gives it a full and entire Liberty, and on the contrary, he moderates the rest, and claps a Print upon them to hold them in, either by some Passion or by some dependance; the persons that have them, are in to some Body else. *Æneas* is absolute Master of his Actions, he has none that he is oblig'd to accommodate himself to upon what occasion soever. Nor is this peculiar to the *Latin Poet*; he imitates therein the *Greek Poet*, whose *Ulysses* is as independant as *Æneas*. *Achilles* has a General over him, but this General is only as the Chief among equal Princes. *Achilles* then is not his Subject, and take him from the Siege of *Troy*, he has no Orders to receive from him. Besides, expecting no favour or good will from him, and being Cholerick and Unjust, he has no Obedience to pay him, nor measures to take to please him, and he thinks he has sufficient grounds to withdraw his Obedience from him. Nay, when he is reconcil'd to him, and enters again upon his Duty, yet he receives no Orders from him; on the contrary, without consulting with this General, or any other of the Confederate Princes, he on his own Head makes a Truce with his Enemies in behalf of them all. 'Tis therefore a great Artifice in *Homer*, when he makes *Achilles* the most Valiant of the Confederates, but withall Unjust, and without Interest, and on the contrary, makes *Agamemnon* the General, very much Interested for the Honour of his Brother *Menelaus* and his own. This is what respects the Hero.

As for the other Personages, *Homer* has made the *Unity of the Character* easie, by giving Violence and Anger to the greatest part of the Commanders on both sides. The *Latin Poet* is harder put to it, because he has made the Enemies of his Hero to have humours that are contrary to that of his Hero, but withal, he has annexed to them such Passions and Dependances that are no small advantage to his *Unity*.

Turnus has in truth no dependance on King *Latinus*, either as his Subject or his Ally. This old Prince is neither his King, nor his General. He depends upon him after another way, as the Courtier of *Lavinia* his Daughter and sole Heiress. For under this pretension

tion he dares not disoblige a Prince, that owes him nothing, and from whom he would obtain so much. He is therefore oblig'd in many respects to submit to him, and to take such measures as take off much of his fierceness and passion. Besides this, he sees the Victories of his Rival, to whom he is oblig'd to yield the Glory of Arms in the judgment of *Latinus* and *Amata* her self; he sees the ill success of all his designs, the death of those he put most confidence in, *Mezentius*, *Camilla*, &c. he sees the *Latins* decrease, and hears the Reproaches they cast upon him. All this must needs cause strange Impressions on the mind of this *Latin Achilles*; and hinder him from carrying on his *Character* so far as the *Grecian* did his.

Mezentius has a less part in the Poem than *Turnus*. But he is too considerable to admit of his furious and cruel *Character* in all its force. The Poet makes this prophane person much in love with his Son, as he was a despiser of the Gods. He so luckily makes use of this natural Passion, that it renders his tenderness conspicuous, and makes the *Character* of *Aeneas* Conqueror over the fury of this

Barbarian. His design in renewing the *Battel* was only to rejoin his Son. * The violence of his Paternal Love forces him to beseech *Aeneas* to favour him so far, as to let him be buried in the same Grave with his Son, and he dies full of the tender and sad Idea he had of his dear *Lausus*.

* Nec recum meus hæc
pepigit mihi fœdera Lau-
sus. Unum hoc per, si qua
est victis venia hostibus,
oro; Corpus humo patiare
regi. Scio acerba meo-
rum Circumstare odia:
hunc(oro)defende furorem.
Et me consortem nati comede sepulcro. *Æn.* 10.

This same Artifice does likewise change the violences of *Didon* into a more moderate *Character* by these two ways. The first is, the

inability wherein the Queen is plac'd,

* Non potui abreptum
divellere corpus & undis
Spargere? Non socios, non
ipsum absumere ferro As-
canium? patriisque epu-
landum apponere mensis.
Æn. 4.

* *What*, Can't I, says she, tear his Body in pieces, and scatter his mangled Limbs in the Sea? O! that I could but cut the Throats of his Comrades, butcher his dear *Ascanius*, and serve him up in a Banquet to his Father, &c. These are the wildest excesses of a most violent and terrible fury. But she is

in such circumstances, that the Reader is not afraid any ill effects will follow. He is not concern'd for *Aeneas*, and *Ascanius*, since they are no longer within her reach, and he only pities this poor

Princess, from whose Mouth her misfortunes had forc'd this Language. * The other Method, is the Love of this same Queen which in the midst of her Rage and fury tames her, and forces her to melt into tears, and to abandon her self to the tenderness of her Passions.

* Improbe amor, quid non
mortalia pectora cogis?
Ite iterum in lacrymas,
iterum tentare precando
Cogitur, & supplex ani-
mos submittere amori.
Id.

Another

Another Method *Virgil* makes use of, is to interrupt the fights by calm and tender *Episodes*, which make the *Character* of the Hero still predominant. Thus the assault made upon the Camp of *Aeneas*, and the fury of *Turnus*, is moderated by the *Episode* of *Remulus* which is diverting: by that of the Ships chang'd into *Nymphs* which is admirable, and by that of *Nisus* and *Euryalus* which is soft and moving. We may reduce all that has been said of the *Unity* of the *Character* to these few Heads.

The first and the Foundation of all the rest, is to give the Hero a precise and sensible *Character*, which may appear in all sorts of Encounters.

Secondly, This Hero must be independent, and left at full liberty to carry on his *Character* and Humour in all the force and extent it is capable of.

Thirdly, The Poet may bestow this very *Character* on the other Personages that are most apparent and active, whether they be on the Hero's side, or on the contrary Party, or whether they be Divine Persons. This is the practice of *Homer* in his *Iliad*.

Fourthly, When there is given to these other Personages some *Character* or other that is opposite to that of the Hero, it must not be carry'd on in all its force. And as this Moderation cannot proceed naturally from Persons themselves, it is produc'd either by some Passion, or by some Dependance, as we have seen in *Dido*, *Mezentius* and *Turnus*.

The Fifth way, is to interrupt the particular Actions which of themselves require an opposite *Character* by such *Episodes* as are suitable to the general *Character*. Thus the Death of *Lausus* causes pity and tenderness to bear sway amidst the Furies of War, and has the same Effects which the *Episode* of *Nisus* and *Euryalus* has. To these five ways we might likewise join the Thoughts, Figures, and Expressions of which we shall speak in the last Book of this Treatise.

CHAP. XIV.

Of the Justness of the Character.

THIS is a Point of the greatest difficulty as well as Importance, as well to those that Compose, as to those that Read and Criticize. It depends not only on the Art, but likewise on the Goodness and Justness of the Genius, and on a profound insight into all Morality.

With

* Scribendi rectè sapere
est principium & fons.
Rem tibi Socraticæ pote-
rant ostendere chartæ.
Pœt.

With great reason then does * *Horace* carry the necessity of this Doctrine so high, and teach us that the Principle and Source of all that is good in a Poem, is this Wisdom which *Socrates* made profession of, that is the Knowledge, and the Practice of *Moral Phi-*

losophy. This teaches us what is Virtue, and what is Vice, and informs us that there are some Qualities which in their own Nature, being neither Vertues, nor Vices, may be indifferently joyn'd to either one or the other of them, and be met with in Bad, as well as Good men.

The first thing we are to Study, is the Nature of each *Character* and *Habit* wherein it precisely consists. What Good or Evil it is capable of, and how far it may rise or fall without degenerating from its Nature, and without being confounded with any other Habit that may perhaps bear some relation thereto. Wherein for Example consists a solid Piety without Preciseness, Grimace, and Libertinism; and without a certain turbulency of Spirit, that is dangerous and of an ill consequence: how far one may extend ones Liberality, without being Prodigal: and how a Man should manage his expences, without being either too Liberal or too Sparing.

To this we likewise refer the Knowledge we ought to have of the Habits or Qualities in general, such as they say are abstracted and separated from the particular Subjects, as also of the Qualities, that are particulariz'd by the Subjects wherein they are, for we should rightly distinguish Valour in general from the Valour of *Achilles*, and not confound that with the Valour of *Aeneas*.

What we say here, is not with a design to exclude out of a Poem, whatever *Morality* condemns. A Poet should never set bad Examples, but there's a great deal of difference between a bad Example, and the Example of a bad Action or a bad Person. The *Lacedæmonians* never intended to propose bad Examples to their Children, when, to deter them from Drunkenness, they expos'd to their view, Slaves that they had made down-right drunk. It is therefore lawful for the Poet to make use of *Achilles's* and *Mezenrius's*, as well as *Ulysses's* and *Aeneas's*. He may represent Prodigality and Avarice, as well as Liberality and the wise Oeconomy of a good Husband, and an honest Trades-Man. But whatever he designs, whether for Virtue, Vice, or any indifferent Quality, he must at least be sensible of what he does, not only because 'twould be a disgrace for him to be Ignorant in the case, but because this Knowledge puts him upon acting with a great deal more exactness.

'Tis so important, that without these notices, he is in danger too often of setting very bad Examples, and of offending against that which is essential to every Art, which is to be profitable, and in particular against the nature of the Fable and the *Epopœa*, whose only design

design is to lay down Instructions of Vertue. If then a Poet knows not what a solid and true Piety is, and how far it may extend without excess, he will introduce a Personage that will pass for a very good Man, he will give him such Vertues and Qualities as are dazzling and lovely, he will create for him the good Will and Esteem of all his Auditors, and after he has Arm'd him with so dangerous an Authority, he will put him upon venting gravely and in quaint Expressions, such Maxims as are false, but fair and plausible in all outward appearance, and with a turn that shall bewitch Mens Minds. Thus *Aeneas* would have been a very bad Example, if being represented so Prudent and Honest a Man, he should prefer the Endearments and Love of *Dido* before the Orders of *Jupiter*: Or if being persecuted by *Juno*, he had slighted this Goddess as if 'twere allowable to be less submissive to God under the Crosses that befall us, than when every thing happens as we would have it. Or lastly if this same Hero relying on the Credit of the Oracles, which could not deceive him, had spared himself the Travels and Dangers he went, as if the Favours and Promises of God who loves us, should make us more lazy and negligent. *Virgil* commits none of these faults. His Conduct teaches us, That the Promises of God, tho' infallible, should yet serve only to put us upon endeavouring more ardently and faithfully to merit the Effects of them. And in this Opposition which he sets between *Juno* and *Aeneas*, he likewise gives us this admirable Lesson: That when God seems to declare himself against us, we should only contend against him with our Prayers, our Vows, our Oblations, our Submission, and that these are the only Weapons by which he suffers himself to be Conquer'd.

But the Poet does not set any bad Example, when he shews in *Megentius* Sentiments, that are contrary to these Maxims. We are neither surpriz'd, nor offended that this Man, whom we know for an Impious Person, seeing his Affairs succeed so ill, should condemn the Gods, acknowledge no other but his own Arm and Javelin, prefer his Son *Lausus* to all the Gods, which others ador'd, and make an Idol of him who is both the Object of his Vows, and the Trophée he would adorn with the Spoils of the Vanquish'd *Aeneas*. No body would live according to these Maxims, but such as would be deliberately Impious, Barbarous, and an Odium to the rest of Mankind, to cure this strange Distemper of the Mind, the Poet presents us with the miserable end of this Atheist, whom the Death of *Lausus* disheartens and oppresses with very sensible pains, raising in him a sense of all the Miseries to which he was reduc'd, which his Brutality and the hopes he had of being re-establish'd, would not let him see till then.

Besides these Vices and Vertues, one is in danger of offending in the wrong use of some middle Quality, and the danger will be greater, and the Error more considerable, if this Quality make a great

great shew and noise, such as *Valour* in War. That of *Achilles* is Vicious, and yet it so dazled the Eyes of Young *Alexander*, that that to partake of that false Glory which he admires in this Hero, he has committed in cold Blood a more unworthy Brutality, than that to which the Anger and Revenge of *Achilles* carry'd him, when he drags the Body of *Hector* round *Troy*, *Hector* was dead, and * *Alexander* drags the live Governor of a Town he had won.

And likewise, without minding what is Good and Vicious in *Valour*, one may be deceiv'd in not rightly distinguishing what is solid in it, from what is only glazing. The Age in which we begin to judge of these Characters, commonly casts us into this Error, and into that we mention'd before: Youth always fastens upon the very first appearances, and never penetrates as far as to the solidity of a thing, and when we are once prepossess'd, 'tis a hundred to one, that we ever get perfectly free from our Prejudices. One must be very fortunate, or have a clear Intellect and exact Judgment, and more than that, a curiosity and desire to be acquainted with that which perhaps one does not judge important enough to deserve a long and serious Study. Very often likewise the Customs of the Countrey, and Education, produce these bad effects upon the Mind, and entertain them in this Ignorance, and in such Judgments as are very disadvantageous to Vertue. If we see Duels fought upon every slight Offence, we shall imagine that a Man has no *Valour*, if he puts up an Affront without fighting, and he will meet with too many of his Friends who will prompt him to this sort of Revenge as Criminal as it is. This is what a Person would never do, who, according to

* Qui didicit patriæ quid
debeat & quid amicis.

the Precepts of * *Horace*, had learnt the Duty of a faithful Friend and a good Subject. And a Poet would never put this Maxim into the Practice, or Mouth of a Personage, he has a Mind to represent as a Man of Honour.

But to return to what we were saying about the distinction that ought to be made between the Lustre and the Solidity of *Valour*; we will make this one Remark, that seems to me very important: 'tis this, That these two things are oft times opposite in the Essence of the Character. Violent and Transporting Characters give a great deal more Lustre to the Actions they animate, and to the Persons that have them; and on the contrary, the most Mild and Moderate, are often without any Lustre and Glory, yet these last are a great deal more proper to Vertue.

Perhaps I insist too much on this Subject, but 'tis of some moment both in General, and in the Instance I propos'd just now of a Warlike *Valour*, since this Quality is most usual in all *Epopées*, and the most capable of dazling both the Poets and the Readers. I will therefore explain this Instance by the *Valour* that is in the *Aeneid*.

How

How many are there, that put a higher value on the Warlike Vertues of *Achilles*, and I will add even on those of *Turnus*, than on those of *Aeneas*? Yet *Achilles* is but a Souldier, and *Aeneas* a Commander. How then comes it to pass that they judge thus? Unless 'tis because they take the Noise, the Show, and the Transports of a furious Man for true Valour.

If after the same manner we compare *Turnus* with *Aeneas*, the Pious Hero will doubtless seem inferior to his Rival. But whoever will sit down here, and will take the consequences and the ordinary attendance of a Quality for the Quality it self, he will fall into the same impertinence as *Numanus*, who in reproach to the *Trojans*, says, they deserve not the Name of Souldiers, and that they had no more courage than Women, because their way of dress is gaudy and delicate. This is doubtless for want of being well acquainted with the Vertues of War, and what the exact Character of a Valiant Man is.

Valour is the finest Ornament of the Character of *Turnus*, and one might add, that 'tis all the goodness that is in it; and this quality in *Aeneas* gives place to several others and principally to his Piety. Therefore Piety is the thing that should be conspicuous in *Aeneas*, his Valour should appear much less, and on the other Hand Valour should be very illustrious and very shining in the person of *Turnus*: So that he should be as much in love with War, as *Aeneas* is in love with, and desirous of Peace. Whatever *Turnus* does in the Battels, or in preparing for them, is usually done with Design, with Pleasure, and with Discourses that are Magnificent, very Pompous, and Cogent. *Aeneas* commonly acts without Noise and Affectation, he speaks little, and if he falls into a Passion, 'tis not so much to fight, as because he is forc'd to fight and defend himself; 'tis not so much to Conquer, as to put an end to the War.

But if the Lustre and the dazzling show make the Valour of *Turnus* more conspicuous than that of *Aeneas*, yet the Actions shew that in truth and reality, the Valour of *Aeneas* is infinitely Superiour to that of *Turnus*. We need only consider them without this Lustre, and without this outward appearance, which a bold Bragadocio and a rash young Man may have as well as the truest Bravo.

Turnus, during the absence of *Aeneas*, assaults his Camp, being design'd, prepar'd and arm'd with Malice, and in three or four days he could not force it. He breaks in by a passage his Bravery had opened for him, he is constrain'd to break out again, and at last, after an Engagement of two days, he is Routed and Vanquish'd by *Aeneas* with a bloody Slaughter. *Aeneas* on the other Hand in the fight of *Turnus*, and in view of an Army of Enemies, assaults an ancient Town well built, and well fortified, and in a few hours becomes Master of its Ramparts and Towers.

He is not forc'd thence by his Enemies, * but

* At Pius *Aeneas* audis
nomine *Turni* deserit &
muros, & summas delapsus arces. *id.* 12.

he comes down to make an end of the War by the Death of *Turnus*, whom he forces to a Battel.

Pallas is conquer'd and kill'd by *Turnus*, and *Lausus* by *Aeneas*. These young Princes were equal in Valour, but there is a great deal of difference between the Bravery of their Conquerors. *Turnus*

* Solus ego in Pallanta feror, soli mihi Pallas Deditur, cuperem ipse parens spectator adesset. *Aeneid.* 10.

† Quo moriture tuis majoraque viribus audes? Fallit te incautum pietas tua. Nec minus ille Exultat demens. Sævæ jamq; altius Iræ Dardanio surgunt ductori. *Æn.* 10.

seeks this Battle; * he makes his Boasts and Brags of it, and insults over this young Enemy, who never fought a Battle before. He wishes *Evander* were present, he would butcher the Son before his Father's Face. This is the Valour of another *Achilles*. † *Aeneas* is far from engaging with *Lausus* after this Manner, who exposes himself for his Father's sake. He on the contrary would save his Life, he drives him off, threatens him, and becomes terrible and furious only, because he was forc'd to kill him. This is an Anger worthy of *Aeneas*, and the exact Character of an Hero more valiant than *Turnus*, but withal more pious than valiant. The extream danger wherein he was, being assaulted not only by *Lausus*, but by a great many others at the same time, does not yet hinder him from taking notice of that Affection which this Enemy (who design'd his Death) had for his Father. Certainly it must needs argue greater Valour and Bravery to spare an Enemy at such a time, than *Turnus* ever made appear in any of his Actions.

Aeneas and *Turnus* do the same Action of Generosity in returning the Bodies of these two Princes. But *Turnus* with his usual Noise and Show insults over *Pallas* and *Evander*, and seems as if he sent back the Body of the Son to his Unfortunate Father, only to

* Qualem meruit Pallanta remitto.

increase his sorrow. * I send him back his *Pallas* (says he) just such a one as he deserves to see him. This is a very cruel generosity, and very becoming an *Achilles*.

* Ingemuit miserans dextramque tetendit, & mentem patriæ subit pietatis imago. Quid tibi nunc, miserande puer, &c.

That of *Aeneas* is all vertuous all sincere. *Turnus* insults o'er *Pallas*, sets his foot upon him, strips him of part of his Armour, and decks himself with it: * *Aeneas* laments

the Death of *Lausus*, makes his Elegy, lifts him from the ground himself; takes him between his Arms, and reprimands the *Tyrrhens* for being so backward in carrying off their Prince. You may see then how in the distribution of the Valour, *Virgil* gives *Aeneas* and *Turnus*, he allows the last all that this Quality has of Beauty and splendor in appearance: and how in giving to *Aeneas* that which was without all dispute greater and more real, he is satisfied with the solid part of it, and makes what is glaring and

and dazzling in it to give place to the sweet temper and the Piety of his Hero. Because Piety makes up the goodness of *Aeneas's* Character, as valour makes up all that *Turnus* has of good in his Character.

But whatever we discommend here in the Character of this last Hero, yet 'tis only an Evil in Morality, which does not make it the less good in a Poetical Sense. These Reflections are not designed to banish it out of Poems, but so to distinguish Vertue from Vice, that a Poet may know what he does, when he gives his Personage the one or the other; and that a Reader may judge of it without being mistaken. That he confound not what a Quality (such as Valour for Instance) has of glaring, with what it has of solidity. That he suffer not himself to be dazzled with the formalities of *Turnus*, as if *Aeneas* were not in truth a great deal more valiant than he: And that he imagine not that any Man of Honour is capable of the generosity, and the War-like Vertues which *Virgil* bestows upon *Turnus*, and *Homer* upon his *Achilles*.

Nor is it at all necessary to carry the Character of an exact and Vertuous Hero, as far as *Virgil* has done that of *Aeneas*. The endeavours he uses to avoid killing *Lausus*, the sorrow he shews for it, the praises he bestows upon him, and the rest that we have taken notice of, exceeds the Character of a simple generosity, and is the Effect of that Piety, which is predominant in *Aeneas*, and in the whole Poem. And it may be so contriv'd that these things, thus carried on, would not only, not be a perfection in a Man of Honour of another Poem, but also spoil the justness of the Character. So great a difference is there between Generosity in general, the Generosity of *Aeneas*, and the Generosity of every other Particular Person.

CHAP. XV.

Of false Characters.

I Call those true Characters which we truly and really see in Men, or which may be in them without any difficulty. No one questions but there have been Men, as generous and as good as *Aeneas*, as passionate and violent as *Achilles*, as prudent and wise as *Ulysses*, as Impious and Atheistical as *Mezentius*, as passionate as *Dido* and *Amata*, &c. So that all these Characters are true. Poets may regularly make use of them. And when they do, these are

not simple and imaginary Fictions, but just imitations of such things as really are or may be.

On the contrary, I affirm that a *Character* is false, when an Author so feigns it, that one can see nothing like it in the order of Nature, wherein he designs it shall stand. These *Characters* should be wholly excluded from a Poem, because, transgressing all the bounds both of Reason and Probability, they meet with no belief from the Readers. They are by so much the more offensive to them, by how much the Poet seems to slight them, and to take them for silly persons on whom he may impose what he pleases.

The desire of amplifying, and making every thing that's said, look great, and marvellous, casts young Poets into this Error, and all others who are not indued with a justness of Mind, and are not rightly informed. The Enthusiastick Genius of *Statius* will afford us some instances of this bad conduct.

He would bestow the *Character* of *Achilles* upon *Tydeus*, and inspire him with his Passions, and his Anger sustained by his Valour. * But is such an excessive Anger

* *Arque illum effracti per-
fusus tabe cerebri A-
spicit & vivo scelerantem
sanguine fauces. Nec co-
mites auferre valent. Stat.*

tolerable which puts him upon eating the Head of his Enemy? Upon drinking the Blood that gush'd from him? Upon devouring his very Brains? Which represents

him with his face horribly besmeared with this Blood and Brains, so that his friends could neither pluck this Rage from his Heart, nor this Head from between his Hands and Teeth. He did not think he should make him valiant enough, if he let him loose to five or six Men only. He must needs make him kill fifty of them. This excess is so much the more ridiculous, since we know that it cost the Poet nothing. A water Poet or a raw Scholar might as easily say, that his Hero kill'd a thousand Men, as that he conquered two or three of them. There is neither Art nor Invention in this, but an ill governed fancy and a perfect Ignorance of the *justness* of his *Character*.

This Poet has done the same in the *Character* he has given to *Capaneus*, he makes him Valiant and Impious. And perhaps he had a mind to imitate *Mezentius*, as he has imitated other passages, of the *Aeneid*. But instead of making such a Man as he ought he has made only a Chimera. Indeed he was not oblig'd to make the violences of this Personage to change into Mildness and Tenderness, as *Virgil* has done that of *Mezentius*, for the reasons above mentioned: But what need had he to make him insult o'er the Gods more like a Mad-Man than an Atheist?

This Hero dies on the Wall of *Thebes*, which he was besieging. He was nigh making the whole Town tremble. * His shadow only put them all into a consternation. He was so far from being touched with Vanity at so surprizing a success, that he thinks this Victory beneath him, and is ashamed of such a pitiful thing. † These Towers which *Amphion* built are too low, he takes it ill that the Fictions of Fable should ever dare to publish that those Fortifications were the Work of a Harper. For where's the difficulty to raise the Ramparts that were raised by a Harp? In truth there was neither need of Swords nor Machines. His hands and his Feet are enough to destroy those Walls and those Towers, to break down Bridges. After he had thus demolished these Fortifications with his Feet and Hands, he takes the Ruines and hurls them at the City, and beats down the Houses and Churches with them. This is what he does against Men.

He does not indeed do so much mischief to the Gods, but he frights them almost as much, and defies them to do him any harm. * *What*, says he to them, *is there none of the Gods dare defend Thebes against me? Where art thou Bacchus? Or thou Hercules? The Dastardly offspring of this infamous City? But I am ashamed*, continues he, *to defy the lesser Deities: Jupiter do thou come, for who else is more worthy to cope with me? See the the Tomb, see the Ashes of thy dear Semele. Come, and defend them, and forget not to bring any thing that may assist thee.* † Heaven presently is in Arms against this simple Man, and seems to be all on fire. *Capaneus* sees all this without being mov'd, and was so far from abating any thing of his fierceness, his threats, and the hopes he had of taking the City, spite of all the Gods, which declar'd War against him, that he was for snatching the Weapons from Heaven it self, and casting its Fires to burn the City. If *Statius* had not imagin'd these Extravagancies, one could never have believed they should enter into the Mind of any Author.

* *Eminuit, trepidamque assurgens desuper Urbem Vidit, & ingenti Thebas exterruit umbra. Stat.*

† *Incepit artonitos: Humilesne Amphionis arces. Proh pudor! Hi faciles carmenque imbelli securi, Et mentita diu Thebarum fabula muri. Et quidnam egregium proferere monia molli Structa Lyra? Simul insulans gressuque manuque Diruit obstantes cuneas tabulataque sevis Destruit, absciliunt pontes rectique frementis Saxea fræna labant, disseptoque aggere rursus Uritur, & truncas rupes in tecta domosque Præcipitat, frangitque suis jam mœnibus urbem. Stat.*

* *Nullane pro trepidis, clamabat, Numina Thebis? Statis? ubi infandæ telluris alumni Bacchus & Alcides? Piger instigare minores. Tu potius venias, (quis enim concurrere nobis Dignior) en cineres Semeleque busta tenentur. Nunc age nunc totis in me conitere telis, Jupiter.*

† *Fulguraque atritis quoties micuere procellis: His, ait, in Thebas, his jam decet ignibus uti. Hinc renovare facem, hincque accendere quercum.*

The Gods of this Poet do not take theſe
 * Ingemuit dictis ſuperùm for extravagancies. * They are really af-
 dolor, &c. fraid of them, and dread this Man alone
 more than all Mankind together. They

betake themſelves to *Jupiter*. *Apollo* groans, *Bacchus* bemoans himſelf. *Hercules* much affrighted, with a Bow in his Hand, knows not on what to reſolve. *Venus* is all in tears. To conclude, the calamity is Univerſal, and to the diſgrace of *Jupiter*, (before whom they ſeem to prefer *Capaneus*) the admiration they conceived for this great Hero had ſtruck them dumb, and made them fear this Sovereign of the Gods had not a ſhaft ſufficient to conquer this ſingle Man. The Poet himſelf gives us to underſtand, that their fear was not altogether groundleſs. For after *Jupiter* had ſhot his Thunder againſt him, with all his force, and had ſhatter'd to Duſt the Armour *Capaneus* wore, this Bravo had ſtill power left him, to ſtand upon his Feet ſo long, that *Jupiter* thought he muſt ſhoot another Bolt at him.

One would ſanie the fear is now over: But ſo great a Poet is not contented with ſo little. *Capaneus* during his life made only the *Thebans* tremble and fly; and now at his Death, when he was deſtroyed by Thunder, he fills his own Men with conſternation, and puts both Parties to flight, becauſe they knew not on which ſide he would fall, nor whoſe Troops he would crush into pieces thereby.

This is an Inſtance of theſe *false Characters*, wherein Men fall for want of Judgment and Knowledge. An Author by theſe great Amplifications thinks he ſhall be a great Poet. But he even degrades himſelf from the very name of Poet; ſince theſe Fictions being of ſuch things as cannot be in Nature are no Imitations. And yet all Poefie is eſſentially an Imitation.

* Scribendi recte ſapere eſt & principium & foris. Eſt modus in rebus, ſunt certi denique fines, Quos ultra citraque nequit conſiſtere rectum.

The Remedy for this is to believe * *Horace* herein, and to be perfectly inſtructed in Morality. 'Tis to know that all things have their Limitations: 'Tis to know theſe Limitations, and to keep within them: 'Tis laſtly to be convinc'd, that thoſe that tranſgreſs theſe bounds, as in the Examples we have been propoſing, in propriety of ſpeech make neither *Characters* nor *Personages* but meer Chimeras, which were never any where but in the Imaginary Species of theſe Authors Brains.

The End of the Fourth Book.

Monſieur

Monfieur *Boffu's* Treatife

OF THE

EPICK POEM.

BOOK V.

Concerning the Machines.

CHAP. I.

Of the feveral forts of Deities.

IN the former Book concerning the *Manners*, we difcourfed concerning the *Terreftrial*, and *Mortal* Perfons, and in this, under the name of *Machines*, we fhall treat concerning the *Divine* and *Immortal* perfons: So that this will be nothing elfe but a Confequence of what has been faid about the *Manners* and the Perfons; fince the *Gods* as well as *Men* are Actors in the *Epopée*. We fhew'd the Necessity of this in our firft

* Book, where we likewise took notice * Chap. 2. that all thefe Divine Perfonages are *Allegorical*.

We obferved that there are three forts of them. Some are *Theological*, and were invented to explain the Nature of God: Others are *Physical*, and they represent Natural things: The laft are *Moral*, and they are the Representations of Virtues and Vices.

These three sorts of *Divinities* or *Allegories*, are sometimes to be met with in one and the same person. Now for Instances of each, and first we will begin with the *Theological*.

In the Convention of the Gods, by which *Virgil* opens his tenth Book, *Jupiter*, *Juno*, *Venus*, and (we might add) *Fate*, are Personages of the first sort; that is, such as represent the *Divine Nature* divided into four Persons, as into so

* *Hominum Divûmque
æterna potestas.*

† *Fata viam inveniunt,
Rex Jupiter omnibus
idem.*

many Attributes. * *Jupiter* is the *Power* of God, *Fate* is his absolute *Will*, to which his very *Power* submits; because God never acts contrary to his *Will*. † *Fate* therefore determines *Jupiter*, who of himself is indifferent, and might as well act in behalf

of *Turnus*, as in favour of *Aeneas* and his party. *Venus* is the *Divine Mercy*, and that Love which God bears towards Vertuous Men; by which he is induced, never to forget them in the miseries they endure upon Earth, but to help them out of 'em, and finally to Reward them. Lastly, *Juno* is his Justice: This punishes even the least offences; spares not even the very best of Men, who not being wholly Innocent, are punished severely for their defaults in this Life, where the Justice and the Temporal Wrath of God is often declar'd against them, and so persecutes them, that there might be nothing left in them but what was Vertuous, Meritorious, and matter of Reward. This Reward is reserved for them in Heaven, where this Vindictive Justice has nothing to do, and from whence

it cannot exclude them, as * *Jupiter* tells *Juno*, when he mention'd *Aeneas*.

* *Indigerem Aeneam scis
ipsa, & scire fateris Deleri
caelo.*

The Poet suits himself to our gross way of conceiving Divine things; and to the Infirmary of our Minds, which makes us look

* *Nulla est regio Teucris
quam det tua Conjux Du-
ra.*

upon these Qualities in God as opposite to one another. * *Mercy* upbraids *Justice* of its severity, that it is never satisfied let

Good Men suffer never so much, and that it never allows them any Repose here on Earth: whilst *Justice* on the other hand, accuses Goodness and *Mercy* of its being the Cause of all the Sins that are Committed, because it shelters Criminals, and puts them in hopes of going off unpunished.

The *Deities* of the second sort, that are purely *Physical*, are employ'd in the first Book in raising the storm against *Aeneas*. *Aeolus* is the Power of Nature, which gathers together about Hills and in their Caverns, the Vapours and Exhalations, whence Winds are form'd: And having digested these Matters to a certain degree of Heat and Dryness, puts them upon those Motions and Agitations which we call the *Winds*. 'Tis thus that *Aeolus* is their Master.

These

These Vapours and Exhalations arise in the Air, which is represented by *Juno*: 'Tis therefore to this Goddess that the God of the Winds is beholden for his heavenly Chear. There's no need of taking Notice what is meant by the persons of *Eurus* and *Zephyrus*, nor that of *Neptune*, who speaks to them.

We have one instance of the *Moral Deities* in the Engagement of *Turnus* with *Aeneas*. The *Furies* which *Jupiter* sends against *Turnus*, are nothing else but the Reproaches of his Conscience, which shew him his Crimes and Impiety: King *Latinus* foretold him of this at the very beginning of the War, giving him to understand, that if he was so insolent as to despise the Gods, when 'twas at his choice not to oppose their Orders, he would at last be oblig'd, when too late, to one that he had offended, and they were Powerful. The *Roman Orator* plainly confirms the truth of this Interpretation. * *Never think* (says he

in his Speech before the Senate against *Piso*) *never think, Gentlemen, that the Gods send the Furies with their burning Torches to frighten Criminals, as Poets upon the Theatre represent them. No: The Injustice, the Villainy, and the Crimes of each Misdemeanor, are his Tormenters. These are the Furies, the Fires, and the Flames, that make them faint away, and fill them with such Horrour and Amazement.* 'Tis thus that *Turnus* is represented in his last Battle. † *Statius* has likewise in few Words very well expressed the Nature of these dismal *Deities*: Which are no where but within our own breasts, there tormenting us by the view of the Crimes we have committed.

* *Notice potare ut in scena videtis, homines consceleratos impulsu Deorum terreri, furiarum tadis ardentibus sua quemque frans, suum Soelus, sua audacia de sanitate & mente deturbat. Hæ sunt impiorum furie, hæ flammæ, hæ facies.*

† *Dii me terrent, & Jupiter hostis. Nec se cognovit euntem: Soelerumque in pectore Diræ.* *Statius.*

There are two things observable in the Practice of *Virgil* that confirm this Doctrine. The first is, that these *Furies* are never sent but against such as merit them: They are the only persons that are terrified by them. The second thing is, that those to whom they are sent, must necessarily own there is such a Being as a God, that takes Vengeance upon the Criminal: For Atheists, that acknowledge no God, are not liable to the Checks of Conscience; nor are they used to be troubled at the Offences they commit against the Deity; nor can they be supposed to be daunted with the apprehension of another Life. So that the *Furies* have nothing to do with them. This is the Reason why the Poet employs none against *Megentius*, although much more Criminal than *Turnus*.

C H A P. II.

Of the Manners of the Gods.

HOMER and the Ancient Poets have bestowed upon their Gods the *Manners*, the *Passions*, and the *Vices of Men*; and some are bold to add, that they have given them such *Manners* as turn them into meer Swine. But if we would interpret what they have said about them, according to the Division I have proposed, and by the *Allegories* that are necessarily to be understood of them, we shall see that these Reproaches have often more of shew than solidity in them.

'Tis true, the Learned men of Antiquity have went upon wrong grounds in a thing of the highest importance, when their Writings have been such, that ordinary Capacities or Men of a shallow Reach, that is almost all Men, have not been able to break the Shell, and look through the Veil, with which they have covered the Truth; and they have been miserably abused in taking the shadow for the substance, and deformed and dangerous Figures for necessary and solid Truths. Whether it proceeded from Pride, Envy, Error, or a bad Conduct, 'tis doubtless a great Fault, and such as we can by no means excuse. But in our design, we may omit, and pass over such Interpretations as a Poet is not obliged to give in his Verses, and we may only consider the Poems, as Works and Instructions that should be all *Allegorical*.

In this sense, 'tis much easier to defend than accuse *Homer*; and more just to praise than blame him. One can find no fault with him for having made mention of many Gods, nor for his bestowing Passions on them, as we hinted in speaking of *Juno* and *Venus*. He might likewise bring them in fighting against Men. For have we not examples of these Expressions and Figures in *Sacred Writ*, and the true Religion? And if 'tis sometimes allowable to speak thus of the Gods in *Theology*, there is a great deal more Reason for doing so in the Fictions of *Natural* and *Moral Philosophy*.

When in these two sorts of Learning we describe the Nature of things; 'tis as easie to describe their Defects, as the contrary. It would argue a Man's being a Novice in Poetry, and that he understood but little of the way of Expression is this sort of Writing, did he imagine, when he sees the Name of a God or Goddess, that he must needs meet with nothing, but what is fine, good, and commendable in these Personages. As if *Virgil* could not have said of *Fame*, that she is a very foul-mouth'd Goddess; nor of *Sleep*, that this God was ill-natur'd, when he deceiv'd good *Palinurus*, and tumbled

tumbled him over-board. 'Tis no more a Solecism to speak thus in Verse, than 'tis to say in Prose, that *Fame* publishes very shameful things; and that *Palinurus* was asleep and fell over-board.

'Tis true we meet with more offensive Passages, such as the Adultery of *Venus* and *Mars* in the *Odyssæis*. But beside, the *Physical* and *Moral Allegories*, which may in some sort excuse these too bold Figures, to say no worse of them; and besides, that we meet with something very like it, written in the simplicity of these Ancient times by Authors, which we cannot condemn, I add further, that though there were no *Allegory*, yet *Homer* is not less excusable. And to make this out, 'tis to be consider'd, that 'tis neither the Poet, nor his Hero, nor any other person of Probity that makes this Recital: but the *Phæacians*, a Soft, Effeminate People, sing it amidst their Festival. Now 'tis always allowable in a Poem, and in other grave and Moral writings, to introduce Vicious persons, who despise the Gods, profane sacred things, and seek in that which is most Holy for excuses and examples to countenance their disorders. *Homer* then by the example of these idle People, who could do nothing but Sing, Dance, Eat and Drink, gives us this Lesson, "That these soft and lazy Exercises are the source of all Vicious pleasures; and that the persons, who live thus are usually pleased to hear these shameful Tales, and to make the Gods themselves partners in their Goatishness. *Horace* learned this Maxim by these Words of *Homer*, as well as by the disorders of his times; when he says, *That a Girl that learns to Dance betimes, learns betimes likewise to play the Whore*. So likewise, we may suppose that *Horace* says of this Place of the *Odyssæis*, as much as of any other, that this Poem is an excellent piece of *Philosophy*, whereby we may learn to be Men of Vertue and Probity, and to avoid all that is base and vicious. From whence we may conclude, that the Recital of *Homer* we are speaking of, is not so much a pernicious Example of Adultery and Impiety, as 'tis a very useful Lesson, which he gives to those that would live well; namely, *That if they would not be guilty of these Crimes, they must fly the Arts and Methods that lead thither*.

But in short, a Poet had need be very cautious of meddling with such dangerous Incidents as these are, if he would not do more hurt than good by his Poems. He should study the Wants, the Interest, the Humour of his Auditors, and the Effects which such Subjects may have upon their Minds. And to speak truth, we live no longer in an Age wherein simplicity might render such a subject tolerable among honest Men: And wherein one might propose it without corrupting the better part of the Audience, and without countenancing that Corruption and Vice which the rest are but too much inclined to. So that how Judicious or excusable soever *Homer* has been in this Invention; yet a Poet now-a-days would be

be neither Judicious nor Excusable, if he should venture to Imitate him therein. It is good to teach what he taught : But 'tis very bad teaching it his way.

However things are, yet this is a particular Case, which should not hinder us from concluding, That *Virtue* and *Goodness* do no more belong to the *Manners* and *Character* of the *Poetical Gods*, than to the *Manners* and *Character* of *Men*.

If a Poet speaks of the *Gods* in *Natural Philosophy*, he will give them such *Manners*, *Speeches* and *Actions*, as are conformable to the Nature of the things they would represent under these Divine Persons. He will say, that the God of *Sleep* is Good, Bad, True, a Cheat, &c. Because we have pleasant Dreams, and we have offensive ones, sometimes they instruct us, sometimes deceive us, very often are vain, &c.

The case is the same in *Moral Deities*. *Minerva* is Wise because she represents *Prudence*. *Venus* is both Good and Bad, because the Passion we enjoy under her Name is capable of these two opposite Qualities.

Theology likewise has its Variety. The most sound part of it

* Domine, ne in furore tuo arguas me : neque in ira tua corripas me. *Psal.* 6.

should say nothing of the *Gods* but what is good : * But it may likewise attribute several passions to them, such as Anger, Revenge, Sorrow, &c. Not that they have any such in reality, but only in condescension

and after the language of *Men* they are said to have such, as we hinted before in speaking of *Virgil's Juno* and *Venus*. But there are several Sects, and a Poet should take care who those are that he brings in speaking. For an *Epicurean*, for instance, cannot give any Passion to the *Gods*. His *Theology* teaches him that they enjoy a perfect Repose, and do not so much as concern themselves with any of the Affairs of Mankind.

We might likewise add that the Passions and the Vices of each person form to him his particular *Theology*. The debauch'd *Pagans* thought the *Gods* could not be happy without enjoying the Pleasures of Sense. And they charg'd upon them their Lasciviousness, as we before observ'd in the Example of the *Phæacians*. There are others who think there is no God at all : Or at least would persuade themselves that he does not regard us. *Virgil* has given us an Instance of this deplorable change in the person of *Dido*. This Princess at first entertains *Aeneas* with Vows and Prayers which she puts up to the *Gods* with a sincere Piety. Because then she was Innocent and at Quiet. She

* Id cinerem, aut Manes credis currere sepultos? Scilicet in superis labor est, et cura quietos sollicitat. *Æn.* 4.

begins to love *Aeneas* contrary to the Vow she had made to the *Manes* of her first Husband ; which to her was a kind of Deity. She begins at the same time to suppose that these * *Manes* are no longer concerned about

bout her, and lay no Obligation upon her to keep her Vow. Last of all, being most corrupted, she becomes guilty of Impiety against the Gods: And seeing that *Aeneas* was about to leave her by their Order, she would persuade him, that they are Ignorant of what is done here on Earth. Not that she was really and absolutely persuaded of so impious a Maxim: The Poet was too judicious to make so great and so strange an alteration in the *Manners* of this Queen, in so short a time. 'Tis her Passion that makes her speak thus. But still 'tis true to affirm that these Words are not absolutely jargon in her Mouth, but have some foundation in her Heart. This therefore is a Beginning of Impiety, which naturally happens to those, whose Vices and Passions are Violent, and which at last leads them into downright Atheism. Atheists speak neither well nor ill of the Gods. They despise this belief, and laugh at those who adore and worship them. Such a one is *Virgil's Mezentius*.

All that we have said here concerning the *Manners of the Gods*, ought to be applied to that which we have said concerning the *Morals or Manners of Men*. The *Manners* of the Gods are capable of the four Qualifications which we have given to the Others. They may be *Poetically Good*, since they may appear in the Speeches and Actions of the Divine Persons we introduce. They will be *suivable*, if we give to these persons such *Manners*, as the Nature of the things we represent require: And if, as we make a King Magnificent and Jealous of his Authority, so we make *Fame* to be a lying and malignant Goddess. They will be *Likely*, if we speak of *Venus*, *Mercury*, &c. Conformable to that which is reported of them in *Fable*, and which the first Poets have invented about them. And they will be *Even or Equal*, if in a long series we see the same *Character* maintain'd.

C H A P. III.

How the Gods act in a Poem.

SINCE among the Gods, there are some Good, some Bad, and some between both; and since of our very Passions we may make so many *Allegorical Deities*: To the Gods one may attribute all the Good or Ill that is done in a Poem. But these Deities do not always act after the same manner. Sometimes they act invisibly, and by meer Inspirations; and this has nothing in it extraordinary or miraculous. This is no more than what we say every day, *That God has assisted us upon such or such an Occasion, or that the Devil has inspir'd a bad Action into this or that Man.* 'Tis thus that * *Juno* helps *Turnus*

* *Juno virēs animumque ministrat. Æn. 9.*

† *Hic mentem Æneas petiit pulcherrima misit, Iret ut ad muros. Æn. 12.*

in the Ninth Book of the *Æneid*, when he was engaged in the Trojan Camp; and thus † *Venus* in the Twelfth Book inspires *Æneas*, and puts him upon Assaulting the Town of the *Latins*, that so *Turnus* might be forced to the Combat, which he industriously avoided. The Poet may make

the Gods act thus, even among Atheists: For though these Impious wretches acknowledge no God, yet they cannot withdraw themselves from his Power. He disposes of them as he thinks fit, and without their perceiving it, can turn their thoughts and designs

* At Jovis interea monitis Mezentius ardens Succedit pugne. Æn. 10.

as he pleases. This is *Virgil's* practice in the person of *Mezentius*. * 'Tis *Jupiter*, who, minded at last to punish him for all his Crimes, engages him in a fight with

Æneas. To this way of the Gods Acting we might likewise refer, that which they insensibly contributed to an Action, for which they are thank'd. The God *Mars* does not appear at all in the fight of the Tenth Book of the *Æneid*:

† Tibi magne Trophæum Bellipotens. Æn. 11.

Yet *Æneas* owns he was obliged to him therein: † And to him dedicates the Trophy which he raised of the Arms of *Mezentius*.

These Divine Actions are simple and deserve not the Name of *Machine*. And they are such as are allowable in the most exact *Tragedies* and *Comedies*.

The other way whereby the Gods Act is altogether Miraculous and Extraordinary; and this, whether they present themselves Visibly,

Visibly, and make themselves known to Men, as when * *Mercury* discovered himself to *Aeneas* in the Fourth Book: Or whether they disguise themselves under some human Shape, without making themselves known, as when † *Cupid* under the Form of *Ascanius* makes *Dido* sensible of his Power, who Carresses him without knowing who he is; or whether without any visible Appearance, they make us only sensible of their Power by some Miraculous Action, as *Venus* in the Twelfth Book, when she cures the wound of *Aeneas*. * The Physician, who had it in hand acknowledges that the Cure is all Divine, and that he has no share in it. The *Machines* that are Prohibited in *Dramatick Poems* are of this second sort: No body cares for seeing Gods or Miracles upon the Stage.

There is likewise a third way that has something of both the other; 'tis indeed a *Miracle*, but yet has very frequently been refer'd to that way whereby the Gods act, which we mentioned first. This third comprehends the *Oracles*, *Dreams*, and extraordinary *Inspirations*. *Virgil* in his Third Book has instances of all this. *Apollo* utters an *Oracle*, the Gods interpret it to *Aeneas* in a *Dream* and the Divine *Helenus* informs him Poetically of very many things. The Speech of *Sibyl* to *Aeneas*, and all that she discovers to him of the *Infernal Shades*, and of his Posterity, is likewise nothing else but one of these *Demi-Machines*. We might to these add the *Hell* of the *Odysseis*: which consists in nothing else but the Conjuring up the Ghost of *Tiresias*, and of several others that were his Attendants.

All these Ways must be probable: And though the Probability in *Machines* is of a very large Extent, since 'tis founded upon Divine Power, yet it is not without some Limitations. We may apply to the *Epopea* those that *Horace* prescribed to the *Theatre*. He proposes three sorts of *Machines*. The first is of those which we can, not only believe, but also endure the sight of: Such is a God present and visibly conversing with the Actors. * He does not absolutely forbid this; but he admits it only in a Plot that requires an Actor of this Importance. † The second sort comprehends such *Machines* as are more incredible and extraordinary: Such as the *Metamorphosis* of *Progne* into a Swallow, and of *Cadmus* into a Serpent. ‡ He does not wholly condemn this *Machine*, nor exclude it from the Poem;

* Ipse Deum manifeste in lumine vidi Intrare muros, vocemque his auribus hausi.

† Infans Dido, infidens quantus miseræ Deus. *Æn.* 1.

* Neque se Aeneas, mea dextera servat: Major agit Deus. *Æn.* 12.

* Nec Deus interit, nisi dignus vindice nodus inciderit. *Hor. Poet.*

† Aut in avem Progne veratur, Cadmus in anguem.

‡ Non tamen iarus Digna geri, promes in stœnam, multaque tolles Ex oculis, quæ nox meret facinora præsens. *Idem*

but

* Quodcumque ostendis
mihi, sic incredulus odi.

† Nec quodcumque volet
poscat sibi fabula credi:
Nec pransæ Lamis vivum
puerum extrahat alvo.
Ibid.

but he banishes it the Stage, and the sight of the Spectators. * These sights, represented thus, are odious; because a Man can never be persuaded, that he sees so strange a *Metamorphosis*. So that, 'tis only allow'd to make a Recital of it. † The third sort of *Machines* is altogether Absurd. *Horace* rejects it entirely. The Instance he pro-

poses is of a Child drawn alive out of the Bowels of a Monster that had devour'd it.

This third sort is likewise to be banish'd the *Epopée*, since there is no Recital that can make the Auditors believe it. The two others are equally allowable, and without the Distinction which *Horace* makes, which is only of Use for the Theatre: Because, 'tis only in *Dramatick* Poems, that there is any difference to be made between that which is acted upon the Stage in view of the Audience, and that which is done behind the Scenes, which afterwards is Recited. Our two Poets have instances of these two sorts of Allowable and Probable *Machines*. All sorts of Deities speak often in the *Epopée*, and are no less the Personages thereof than Men are, among whom they are often mix'd. Therein are likewise rehearsed several *Metamorphoses*, as that of *Ulysses's* Fleet into a Rock, and that of *Aeneas's* Fleet into as many Nymphs as there were Ships.

'Tis true these *Metamorphoses* are very rare, because they are a great deal less Credible than the rest. This shews that one must suit one's self to the Gust of the Audience in this sort of Probability. That which was allowable in the Ages *Homer* and *Vergil* liv'd in may be less regular in other times.

This puts me upon making a Reflection on the Method of making use of those *Machines* probably, that are not of themselves Probable enough. The *Machines* which only require Divine Probability (as that for instance which we have been discoursing of) should be so disengaged from the Action of the Poem, that one may substract them from it, without destroying the Action. But those that are necessary, and which make the Essential parts of it, should be grounded upon human Probability, and not on the sole Power of God. Now the *Episodes* of *Circe*, the *Sirens*, *Polypheeme*, and the like are necessary to the Action of the *Odysseïs*, and yet they are not humanly Probable. *Homer* artificially brings them under the *Human Probability*, by the simplicity of those before whom he causes these fabulous Recitals to be made. He says very pleasantly,* *That the Phæacians liv'd in an Island at distance from those*

* Εἴπον δ' ἐν Σχερῇ ἱερῇ
αἰνέειν ἄλκιμονα. *Odys.*
lib. 6.

Countries where men of a Genius dwell. *Ulysses* knew them before he made himself known to them; and having observ'd that they

they were simple and credulous, and that they had all the Qualities of those lazy People, that admire nothing so much as to hear of Romantick Adventures: He pleased them by these Recitals that are suited to their own humour. But even here the Poet is not unmindful of his more understanding Readers. He has in these Fables given them all the Pleasure that can be reap'd from *Moral Truths*, so pleasantly disguised under these Miraculous *Allegories*. 'Tis by this Means that he has reduced these *Machines* to Truth and a Poetical Probability.

Virgil likewise relates some of these Fables. He does not allow himself the same Pretence; he has others to fly to: One of the principal is, that he is not the Author of them. He relates them after *Homer*, whose Authority had already establish'd them: So that he had less measures to take.

CHAP. IV.

When one must make use of Machines.

THIS Question is easily resolv'd by the Practice of our Poets. We may in short affirm, that *Machines* are to be made use of all over, since *Homer* and *Virgil* do nothing without them. They constantly put their Gods upon duty.

* *Petronius* with his usual Vehemency orders that it should be thus. "He would have his Poet converse less with Men than with the Gods: Leave throughout some signs of his prophetic Transports, and of the Divine Fury that swells him: He would have his thoughts be full of Fables, that is of those *Allegories* and ingenious Figures, which, like *Enigma's*, put the invention of the Readers upon a pleasing Rack, and leave them to guess in their turns what the Poet himself has written like a Prophet. Lastly, he would have a Poem be distinguished from History in all its parts, not only by the Numbers, but by this Poetical fury, which expresses it self only by *Allegories*, and does nothing but by the Assistance of the Gods.

He therefore that would be a Poet, must leave *Historians* to write, that a Fleet was shattered by a Storm, and cast upon a strange Coast: And must say with *Virgil*, That *Juno* went to *Aeolus*, and that this God upon her instance unkenne'd the Winds against

Q

Aeneas.

*Non enim res gestae verbis comprehendendae sunt, quod longe melius Historici faciunt: Sed per ambages Deorumque ministeria, & fabulosum sententiarum tormentum precipitandus est liber Spiritus; ut potius furentis animi vaticinatio appareat, quam religiose orationis sub testibus fides.

Aeneas. Let him learn an *Historian* to write, That a Young Prince behaved himself upon all occasions, with a great deal of Wisdom and Discretion: And let him say with *Homer*, that *Minerva* led him by the hand in all his Enterprises. Let an *Historian* relate, that though *Agamemnon* fell out with *Achilles*, yet he could not but acknowledge that he stood in need of his Assistance for the taking of *Troy*: And let a Poet say, that *Thetis*, disgusted at the affront offered to her Son, goes up to Heaven, demands satisfaction of *Jupiter*; and that this God, to satisfy her, sends the God of Sleep to *Agamemnon*, who puts the Cheat upon him by making him believe he must take *Troy* that very day.

Plutarch, *Livy*, and other Authors of the *Roman History*, will tell us, that he who prescribed Laws to the *Romans*, shut himself up in a Wood, and feigned that a Nymph dictated such Laws to him, as afterwards he should propose to his Subjects. A Poet will say, That *Aeneas* being alone with *Sibyl* of *Cuma* in the Forest of *Averna*, she makes him go down to the *Infernal Shades*, and there see the Rewards of good, and the Punishments of bad Actions; and that the *Manes* of *Anchises* informed him what sort of Genius he should inspire that State with, which he was going to establish in *Italy*. And if we would Poetically reduce this Fiction into the Probability of History; let us not like an *Historian* say, that as *Numa* feigned he had Conferences with *Egeria*, so *Aeneas* feigns that *Sibyl* made him see in a Dream all that we read of in the Sixth Book: But let us say that this Hero was let out of Hell by that Gate which was appointed for the sending out of False Dreams.

'Tis thus that our Poets make use of *Machines* in all the parts of their Works. We might take a more particular View of them, if we would but examine all the Parts of the Poem and the Narration. The Proposition in each of our three Poems makes mention of the Gods; the Invocation is addressed to them, and the Narration is full of them. The Gods are the Causes of the Actions. They make the Plots, and dispose the Solution of them too. This is so plain that it needs no farther proof. I will insist only on the Unravelling of the Plots, which we may look upon as that part of the Poem, which is the most Important in this Point, especially if we consider that *Aristotle* and *Horace* have treated of *Machines* more expressly in this, than in any other part of the Poem.

* Φασι γὰρ ἐν τῇ τῆς
λίσσεως τῶν μύθων ἐκ αὐτῶ
δαίμων συμπαύειν, καὶ
μὴ ἀσπασθῆναι ἐν αὐτῇ Μῆδεια.
ἀπὸ μηχανῆς. *Arist. Poet.*
c. 15.

* *Aristotle* speaking of Tragedy tells us, "That the Solution of the Fable should proceed from the Fable it self, and not from any Machine, as in the *Medea*. *Horace* seems less severe. He only says, That the Gods should not appear, but when the Dignity of the Plot requires their

Presence. But this is only designed for the Theatre.

This

This is observable by the Consequence of these Quotations. If *Aristotle* had intended in this to speak of the *Epopea* he should have produced for his Instances the *Unravelling* of the *Iliad*, and that of the *Odyssseis*, in both of which the Gods are concerned. *Minerva* fights close to *Ulysses* against the Gallants of *Penelope*; she helps him to kill them, and on the morrow claps up a Peace between *Ulysses* and the *Ithacans*, and so concludes the *Odyssseis*. In the *Iliad*, the Gods meet to appease the Anger of *Achilles*, and *Jupiter* sends *Iris*, *Thetis* and *Mercury* on this Errand. *Minerva* likewise helps *Achilles* in his last fight with *Hector*. She stops *Hector* that fled from him, and when both had cast their Javelins at each other without doing the least hurt, the Goddess takes up the Lance of *Achilles*, and gives it him, whilst *Hector* is upon unequal terms, arm'd only with his Sword. *Virgil* has imitated these Examples. *Aeneas* as well as *Achilles* is clad in Divine Armour. *Juturna* gives *Turnus* his Sword agen, and *Venus* helps *Aeneas* to his Spear: And at last *Jupiter* sends a Fury, which drives away *Juturna*, and frightens *Turnus* so, that he scarce knew where he was, nor what he did in this last Battle.

C H A P. V.

How the Machines are to be us'd.

THE Use of the *Machines* in the *Epopée* is quite contrary to that which *Horace* prescribes for the *Theatre*. This Critick would not have them be made use of in *Tragedy*, but when needs must : And on the contrary, 'tis requisite that an *Epick Poet* should not make use of them, but when they might be let alone, and then he should order them so, that his *Action* stand in no need of them. How many *Gods* and *Machines* does *Virgil* make use of to raise the storm, which casts *Aeneas* upon *Carthage* ? And yet this does not hinder but that this miraculous *Action* may be look'd

* Cum (ubito affurgens
fluctu nimbofus Orion I
vada cæca tulit. *Æn.* 1.

† Et sciendum quod Dii
nisi datâ occasione nocere
non possunt.

upon as the ordinary Effect of a meer natural Cause. * He makes one of his Personages say that the Cause of this Storm, which surpriz'd the *Trojans*, is the Rising of the blustering Constellation of *Orion*. Upon this the † Commentators have very well observ'd ; that the *Poetical Gods* can do no harm, unless they have some favourable opportunity of doing it. 'Tis never to be suppos'd that there are any storms during the *Halcyonian days*. This would be an affront to the Power of the *Gods*, by ascribing to them such a force as contradicts *Poetical Probability*. So that, tho' beside this short season, there is scarce any part of the Year, but when very probably and without a Miracle one might be tols'd about with a Storm ; yet *Virgil* raises his Storms only in a season that is more particularly subject to them. The four we read of in the *Æneid*, do all happen during the Rising of *Orion*. The first casts *Aeneas* upon *Carthage* ; The second surprizes him a hunting with *Dido* ; The third obliges him to put into *Sicily*, where he Celebrates the Anniversary of *Anchises* ; and the fourth closes the fine Day he had chose for the Sports, and quenches the fire that burnt his Fleet. The Poet informs us that all these Storms which surpriz'd *Aeneas*, were the effects of one and the same Cause. * For

* Quin etiam Hyberno mo-
liris fidere classem Expecta
facilemque fugam, ventol-
que ferentes. *Æn.* 4.

Dido chides *Aeneas* for preparing to leave her, whilst this dangerous Constellation had still an influence o'er the Sea ; and she conjures him (tho' in vain) to stay till this bad season was over.

According

According to this Practice, a Poet will be very cautious how he makes use of a *Machine* to help him out of a difficulty, wherein his own unskilfulness has cast him. But he will call in the assistance of the *Gods* to honour his Poem and Hero, and no one will object against him, that 'tis for want of Art and Invention, that he is oblig'd to implore the Aid of these supernatural Powers. No one will cast these Reproaches upon *Virgil* in the Examples we have cited, nor in his other *Machines*. It was not for want of Skill or Invention, that he had recourse to *Juno* and *Neptune*, either to raise a Storm upon the Fleet of *Aeneas*, or to lay it again. So likewise, a Woman stabb'd to the heart with a Ponyard, as *Dido* was, might very well die of the wound, without *Iris's* being sent by *Juno* to clip a lock of Hair off her Head. A Ship well mann'd, and near the Haven, might without any Miracle enter in before another that was farther off. 'Tis therefore without any necessity that the Poet makes use of the *Gods* therein, and says that *Mnestheus* would have gain'd the prize perhaps, had not *Cloanthus* put up so many vows, and had not so many *Sea-Gods* that heard him, lent him a helping hand.

Virgil makes use of several ways, from whence one may discover there was necessity for *Machines*. Sometimes the thing, that is done by a God, is necessary, but it might as well have been done by a Mortal. *Aeneas* should be inform'd of what had happen'd to *Dido*: But there was no need that *Venus* should disguise her self under the shape of a *Tyrrhenian* Damsel, that was hunting in a Wood. A mere Damsel might have inform'd him: And 'tis thus that we ought to interpret the Changes of the *Gods* into Men. These are the ways whereby Poets express themselves. An *Historian* would say that *Beroe* excited the other *Trojan* Dames to fire their Fleet: And a Poet says, that *Iris*, sent express by *Juno*, takes upon her the shape of *Beroe*.

Sometimes the Action ascrib'd to a *Deity* cannot be done by a mere Man: But then this Action shall not be at all necessary. A mere Mortal cannot transform the Ships of *Aeneas* into Nymphs. But then whether they are thus transform'd, or whether they are destroy'd by fire, still they are lost. Nor can any one see what alteration one of these two Incidents would have caus'd in the Affairs of *Aeneas* more than the other.

I have already mention'd the *Infernal Shades* of the sixth Book, the *Fury* that was sent by *Jupiter* to *Turnus*, and several other.

We may therefore conclude that a *Machine* in the *Epick Poem* is not an Invention to wind ones self out of any Difficulty, that is intricate, affected, and proper to some parts of the Poem: But that 'tis the Presence of a *Deity*, and some supernatural, extraordinary Action, which the Poet inserts into almost all the Incidents of his Work, to make it look more Majestical and surprizing, and to give his

his Readers a Lesson of Piety and Vertue. This mixture should be so made, that one might retrench the *Machines* without cutting off any thing from the Action.

CHAP. VI.

Whether the Presence of the Gods is any Disparagement to the Heroes.

THE care of our Poets in making the Actions and Designs of their Hero's to succeed by the assistance of the Gods, puts me upon adding the following Reflections to what has been already said. One would think there was no question to be made whether the Love and favour of God were an honour or a Disparagement to those he thus Loves and Favours. And yet, we suffer our selves to be so far prepossess'd with sensible and ordinary things, that we become liable to more extravagant thoughts. We judge of the Justice, the Favours, and (if I may so say) of the Duties of God; just as we do of the Justice, the Favours, and the Duties of Men. In a fight between Two persons, if a Third steps in, and assists one of them to kill the other, we blame that third person, and with him condemn his friend, who was so much a Coward as to stand in need of Succour, to protect them both from disgrace. These thoughts are proper, and this Indignation just. But Men treat God after the same Manner. " *Jupiter*, say they, should not " have assisted *Aeneas*. Was not this Hero brave enough to fight " *Turnus* alone, and valiant enough to Conquer him? Where is " there any need then of this foreign Assistance? Does it not re- " flect upon the Hero and the God too? And would *Turnus* have " done less, had he had the same Advantage? This is their way of arguing: from whence it must be infer'd, that the Love and Favour of God will serve only to make those, that he would assist, and, and that venture to make use of that Assistance, appear Weak, Impotent, Cowardly, and not worthy of being Conquerors: One should thereupon never pray to him nor thank him for any happy success. And by this means the Character of *Moxentius* will be the Character of a perfect Hero, and of a truly valiant Man. This Bravo is not for having his Glory eclipsed by the Assistance of any Deity: His Sword and his Arm are the only Gods he acknowledges and invokes. He vows a Trophy to his Victory; but this vow is only address'd to his Son *Lausus*, whom he designs to adorn with the spoils of vanquish'd *Aeneas*. These are the Prayers he makes for

for his Victory, and these the Thanksgivings he designs to make. And these are likewise the Heroes those Men would make, who find fault with *Jupiter* and *Minerva* for having bestowed the Victory on *Aeneas*, *Achilles*, and *Ulysses*.

'Tis true, it would reflect upon an Hero, if himself did nothing; if the Hope and the Confidence he plac'd in the Promises and Favour of God rendring him more negligent, he should wait for the effect with his hands in his bosom; or else, if exposing his Weakness and his little Valour, and being just upon the point of yielding, he ow'd his preservation and his Victory only to Gods and Miracles. But the Practice of our Poets removes this inconvenience, and we have fully satisfied the World as to this point, when we observ'd, that the presence and the Action of the Gods should be so order'd, that one might retrench ev'ry thing that was extraordinary and Miraculous, without making any alteration in the Action of the Humane Personages. By this means the *Epopee* will be neither a School of Impiety and Atheism, nor of Idleness and Sloth. But Men will there learn to adore God, and acknowledge him as the Only and Necessary Principle of all the Good that can be done, and without whom the most puissant Princes, and the most accomplished Heroes cannot succeed in any of their Designs. 'Tis he that inspires Men with good Designs, gives them Courage to undertake them, and power to execute them. Men will learn to respect, and submit to him; because this Submission and Humility, which makes even Great Men stoop to their God, is the Cause and the Occasion of their being elevated above the rest of Mankind. They will learn to fear him, by considering the Misfortunes those Men bring upon themselves, who abandon him: And because when our Passions have shut our Eyes and stop'd our Ears to his Orders and Instructions, we are too slow in apprehending what a dreadful thing it is to make him our Enemy. They will put an entire confidence in his Words and Promises: But withal knowing that they suppose one shall merit the effects of them by using ones utmost endeavours, an Hero will so behave himself in all his Actions, as if he ought to gain the success alone without the assistance of the Deity: Because, as the Ancients say, the Gods do not absolutely give us what they seem to give us, but they sell it at the price of our Labours.

But if on one hand God be the Author of all the good we do; 'tis true likewise to say that 'tis our selves that really do, whatever God does in and by us: And since these Actions which God inspires into us, procures for us, and for which he gives us all the Courage and Strength that is necessary, are truly and properly our own Actions; it follows that the more God helps and favours us, the more Glory and Honour he does us. And this is the difference that is between the Assistance of God and that of Men. The

Actions of Men belong only to those that do them: So that their Aid diminishes our Glory, as much as the Divine Assistance heightens it. Our Poets inform us thus much, and *Achilles* who was so jealous of his Honour, knows well enough how to make the Distinction we have here proposed. He was too high spirited to admit of the least assistance which might lessen his Glory: He charges the *Grecians* to keep off from *Hector*, whom he pursues. But when *Minerva* offers to assist him in this pursuit, and to help to conquer and kill him, he was so far from rejecting this Divine Aid, that he thinks it an honour to him, and brags of it ev'n to *Hector* himself.

Monsieur *Cornouille* will allow me to end this point with what he has said about it in his *Andromeda*: *Phineus* casts the same Reflections upon his Rival *Perseus*, as one might upon *Aeneas*.

But he is young, passionate and impious, and has the Character of *Mezentius*, * in that he acknowledges no other Gods but the Eyes of *Andromeda*; so that he is very fit to act that part. Queen *Cassiopea* makes the Answer to him.

PHINEUS.

WHAT has he done, that's worthy to be prais'd,
But what another might, if Jove had pleas'd?
Let him be arm'd like us, what Enterprize
Dare he then undertake, all Hero as he is?
Ten thousand might have been than him more Brave
Had Heav'n but deign'd to help them like this Slave:
They would have been more generous and great,
The Monster slain, the Danger at their feet.
'Tis easie vent'ring, when the fear is o'er,
To fight a Foe, that can offend no more;
To sieze the certain Conquest, when 'tis won:
And this is all th' Exploit that He has done.
Now what Reward, what Praise, I can't conceive,
So mean a Conquest merits to receive.

CASSI-

CASSIOPEA.

WHAT Merit's praise, you scorn: A blindness this
None can conceive.
Heav'n than our selves knows better what we are;
As men deserve, so they its Favours share.
You might have had as great an Aid Divine,
Had Jove but seen, like his, your Vertues shine.
But these are special Favours, plac'd on high
Which vulgar Souls can ne'er expect to see.
The Gods, being just, reserve this special grace
Only for noble Souls, and for the Heav'n-born Race.

The End of the Fifth Book.

Monſieur Boſſu's Treatiſe
OF THE
EPICK POEM.

BOOK VI.

*Concerning the Thoughts and
the Expreſſion.*

CHAP. I.

The Foundation of this Doctrine.

THE Doctrine of the *Thoughts* and that of the *Expreſſion* ſtand upon the ſame Foundation. Both *This* and *That* is nothing elſe but the Art of imprinting on our Auditors ſuch Ideas as we would have them receive. It ſeems as if this Notion belonged rather to the *Expreſſions* than the *Thoughts*; ſince the *Thoughts* being nothing elſe but Ideas, one would imagine that if they were well *Expreſſed*, that would be ſufficient to imprint them on the minds of the Hearers. But you will ſee that this is not enough, if you reflect, that there is a great deal of difference between making any one comprehend what we think and have a mind to, and the inſpiring into him the ſame Inclinations, and the ſame *Thoughts*. A good *Expreſſion*,

Pression is enough for the first. But it often happens, that if I would give another the same Inclinations, which I have my self, I shall succeed better, if I express quite contrary *Thoughts*, than if I clearly discovered the Ideas of my mind, and my real *Thoughts*. If we pretend an Esteem and Friendship for any one in the presence of a jealous and envious Rival, we shall not make him conceive any of those good *Thoughts* for him; but, on the contrary, we shall render the person, in whose behalf we speak, odious and contemptible to him. Figurative speeches may likewise furnish us with Instances of this Nature. We express not our precise *Thought* in an *Hyperbole*, we say a great deal more of a thing, than we conceive of it, and more than we would have others conceive of it; and the *Irony* does the contrary.

Therefore this part of *Elocution* we are speaking of, does not consist in *Expressing* ones Ideas, or in making others apprehend the Ideas we propose; but in proposing such Ideas as may imprint those that we would have imprinted, let them be the same with those we propose, or the contrary, or any other. So that three things are expedient for this purpose. First, to have a right conception of the Idea we would imprint on the minds of the Auditors: It must be pure and disengage'd from all those that may prejudice our design. Secondly, to know what *Thoughts* are most proper to imprint this Idea, by considering the present Humour, Interest, and Disposition of our Audience. And thirdly, to make a good Choice of such *Expressions* as are most proper and suitable.

That which is most commonly prejudicial to the first of these, namely to the Purity of the Ideas, is, that beside each particular Idea which we Imagine, there is likewise a general Idea, which seldom fails mixing with almost all the rest: 'Tis that Idea which we conceive of our selves, and which we would fain represent as great, fine, excellent, and in a word such as we our selves conceive it. This is evident, especially in that kind of Oration which the *Rhetoricians* have stil'd the *Demonstrative*. It seems as if an Orator in such an Harangue speaks more to entertain us with a vast Idea of himself than of his Hero: And when we go away from hearing the *Panegyrick* of any *Saints* or person of *Quality*; 'tis seldom that we praise or dispraise either the One or the Other of them upon the account of what the Orator has said: But we only cry, "That this Orator has an Eloquent Tongue, or that he is but so, so: As if we went to hear his Speech, only to pass a Judgment upon his, not the Hero's person. The two other kinds of *Oratorical Discourses* are not wholly free from this Vice. Some are so vain, as to attempt it upon all occasions, and at every turn. They are full of this vast Idea of themselves, that they cannot keep it in, but out it must come, spread every where, and

and like a Deluge overflow all the Judgment, and little Sense they have. We can produce instances enow, even in the *Juridical Kind*, though that is more confin'd than the other two.

Besides, did these Persons understand wherein a true praise does consist, and were they Masters of the second quality we requir'd, which is, to know what *Thoughts* and *Sentiments* a Man should propose in order to raise a great Idea of himself in the minds of those that hear him; they would then correct this first defect, they would speak correctly, and say nothing but what was of Consequence and to the Purpose. But since their first Error proceeds from a Defect in judgment, it cannot be alone. They imagine that the true esteem of an *Orator* or a *Poet* consists chiefly in fine *Thoughts*, in strong and lofty *Expressions*, in passions carry'd on to an extream, or in other such like things, which in truth belong not to *Eloquence*, and sometimes produce effects quite contrary to the design of an unjudicious Author.

A Lawyer, for instance, will Imagine that his Esteem depends upon making a set Speech, adorn'd with figures, and full of a great many pretty *Antitheses*: He will be sure to heap figure upon figure in his pleading: And chuse rather to enervate a good Argument, and lose his Cause by an unpardonable flight, than not give his *Antitheses* all the Embellishments he judges they are capable of. This is what *Pedius* did according to *Persius's* account of him.

* *Theft (says th' Accuser) to thy charge*

I lay,

O *Pedius!* What does gentle *Pedius*
say?

Studious to please the Genius of the
Times,

With Periods, Points, and Tropes, he flurs
his Crimes.

* *Fures, ait Pedio. Pe-*
dus quid? Crimina raris
Librat in Antithesis.
Doctus posuisse figuras
Laudatur. Pers. Sat. 1.

[*English'd thus by Mr. Dryden.*]

Martial's Pessimumus was troubled with another kind of whim. He had a vast esteem for the Knowledge of *History*, and thought this Science must needs make him pass for a very Learned Man. He therefore soon quits his Subject to declaim against *Hannibal*, and *Misbridates*, and to plead the *Romans Cause*: As if the Matter in debate were concerning their being Conquerors of the World, whereas in truth the Controversie was only about *straw heads*. It was not sufficient to inform this Pleader of the Process of his Cause, and of the business on foot; 'twas likewise requisite he should be inform'd of what he was to have no hand in.

* *With*

* Non de vi, neque caede,
nec veneno; Sed lis eſt
mihi de tribus Capelliſ.
Viciſſi quæſor has abeſſe
ſuſco. Hoc Judex ſibi
poſtular probari. Tu
Cannæ, Miſtridaticumque
bellum, Et perjuræ Pinnici
favoris, & Syllæ, Mariuſque
Muciiſſi Magnâ voce tonas,
manuque tota: Jam dic, Poſ-
tume, de tribus Capelliſ.
Mar. Lib. 6. Epig. 19.

* With Poiſonings, Murders, Rapes we've
nought to do;

The Judge impatiently expects that you
Should prove how contrary to Roman Laws
My Neighbour ſtole my Kids: For that's
the Cauſe.

But you with ſtrech'd-out hands and cla-
morous Bawl

Thunder the Punick War: wound the Hall;
Who fought with Miſthriſlates; how much
Blood

Was ſpilt at Cannæ; how that Sylla ſtood
Competitor with Marius, fought his doom;
And how bold Scævola protected Rome:
Enough of this.——Now, priſtee, Lawyer
tell

What ſad miſhap to my three Kids befall.

The more Vanity any Man has; the more ſubject he is to theſe Vices. Therefore Poets ſhould be more upon their Guards, than Orators. The Compoſures of the laſt are only to be ſpoken, and to eſtabliſh for their Authors a preſent Fame. But a Poet has Immortality ſo much in his Thoughts, that he ſancies he has enough and to ſpare on't; and promiſes it with ſo much Confidence to others, as if his own were indifputable, and as if all his Enemies were deſtroj'd to the very laſt Rat and Butter-Wife. Theſe Poets will ſtuff a Poem with *Deſcriptions* either ill plac'd, or ill manag'd; with affected and uſeleſs *Figures*, with forc'd and inſipid *Sentences*, with *Similes* more fine than juſt; and with other ſuch like *Ornaments*: And by this means they deſtroy the Idea they ought to give of their Subject, by imprinting on their Readers minds nothing elſe but the Idea of their Knowledge, Eloquence, and fine Genius, becauſe they forſooth ſanie that the Politeness of a Genius, and the Honour of an Author conſiſts in theſe things. They judge of the *Ancients* and *Moderns* according to theſe Ideas; and ſuppoſe they have excell'd *Homer* and *Virgil*, and all other Poets, when (without minding the *Character*, or any thing elſe that is peculiar and proper to each Poem) they have heap'd up in that, which they compoſe, whatever appear'd beautiful in all the reſt; and when they have tranſplanted theſe pretended Beauties with as little ſkill, as if the Noſe or the Lips of an handſome perſon, had the ſame Cornelineſs upon all ſorts of Faces, without any diſtinction of Age, Sex, or Proportion.

This was not *Virgil's* Opinion, when he imitated the *Greek* Poet. He has given another ſort of *Character* to his *Aeneid*; and he well

well observ'd, that this oblig'd him to give the things he borrow'd, a quite different Turn. This made him say, "That 'twas harder "to steal one Verse from *Homer* than to rob *Hercules* of his "Club. This great Man had just and pure Ideas, and perfectly knew how to inspire his Audience with them, without quitting his design, to run after false lights, and glittering thoughts, by an indiscreet Vanity, more pardonable in the Rhapsody of a Scholar, than in the Maturity of a Master. Let us apply this to some general Thoughts.

CHAP. II.

Concerning Descriptions.

Descriptions are properly such Speeches as explain the parts and properties of some thing or other. This Term sometimes extends even to Actions: But that of a *Recital* or *Narration* is more proper to them, especially when these Recitals are of some Length, such as is that of the *Tempest* in the first Book of the *Aeneid*, the *Sports* of the Fifth, the *Infernal shades* of the next Book, the *Battles* of the Second part, with several Others which I was willing to comprehend under what I said concerning the *Narration*. They are too considerable to be mention'd here under the Name of *Sentiments* or simple *Thoughts*. The *Descriptions* we now speak of are only parts of these long *Recitals*. They therefore must be short; and moreover, necessary and suited to the general *Character* of the Poem, and to the Particular *Character* of the Subject matter that is describ'd, as far as possible.

The *Description* of *Carthage*, which *Virgil* makes the Frontispiece of his *Aeneid* is contained in six Verses. It tells us that this City is seated over against *Italy*, facing the very mouth of *Tiber*; that it is powerful in War, and that *Juno* had a mind to make it the seat of the Universal Monarchy. This is the Cause of the Anger of this Deity, and that which makes the *Plot* of the Poem.

The Readers would not have imagined how *Aeolus* could keep in and let loose the Winds as he thought fit, if they had not been informed, that they are inclosed in Caverns. The Poet spends twelve Verses upon it.

The Ships of *Aeneas*, so roughly handled by a *Tempest*, and at a Season, when the Sea was liable to frequent and unforeseen Storms, had need of an *Harbour*, that was free from this Danger,
and

and very still; and since it was in a strange and unknown Country, 'twas requisite this *Haven* should be in a private and secret Place. This is what *Virgil* describes in Eleven Verses.

Venus presents her self to her Son, disguis'd like a Maid. The Poet is oblig'd to tell how this Maid happen'd to be in a wide Forest. He represents her in a hunting Habit. He is likewise oblig'd to reduce to Probability such an extraordinary thing as that of a Maid in Armour. A *Description* of seven lines does it completely.

Descriptions sometimes are mix'd with some Passion or another. In this case not only the Thread of the Discourse should make them very Natural; but they should likewise be in some measure assisting to the Passions to which they are joyn'd. That fine *Description* of a Calm and quiet Night in the Fourth Book, renders the cruel Disturbances of *Dido* a great deal more moving, since they rob her of that Rest which all Nature enjoy'd, to the very vilest and most despicable Creatures.

* Nox erat, & placidum
carpebant fessa soporem
Corpora per terras: Syl-
vaeque & saeva quierant
Æquora: cum medio vol-
vuntur sydera lapsu. Cum
tacer omnis ager, pecudes
piscæque volucres, Quæq;
lacus late liquidos, quæq;
aspera dumis Rura tenent:
Sompo positæ sub nocte si-
lenti Lenibant curas &
corda oblita Laborum. Et
non infelix animi Phæ-
nissa, nec unquam Solvi-
tur in somnos.

* 'Twas Night, each weary Creature took
its Ease;

Hush'd were the Woods, and silent were
the Seas:

Pois'd in their Height the Stars did seem
to rest,

Each Field was still, whilst ev'ry Bird
and Beast,

The Monsters of the Deep, the Savage
Bears,

Were laid to sleep, and dos'd away their
Cares.

Only unhappy *Dido* finds no rest,

Poor Queen! So tortur'd is her Love-
sick breaſt!

† At non infelix.

If instead of this admirable Turn, † Only
unhappy *Dido*, the Poet, carrying his *De-
scription* farther, had said:

‡ Aeneas celsa in puppi,
jam certus eundi Carpebat
Somnos rebus jam rite
paratis.

‡ Whilst the *Dardanian* does securely
rest

In his Tall Ship for sudden flight prepar'd:

Then the whole would have been cold and insipid.

The *Description* of the *Trojans* being hard at work, and eager to leave *Carthage*, is likewise extreamly well manag'd. On one hand it shews what good Effect the presence of a Lord and Master has; for 'tis the presence of *Aeneas* that hastens their Work:

* He does his Fleet without delay prepare.
The *Trojans* ply the work, the busie Main
Is fill'd with noise, the Ships now float
again.

“ Whole Oaks, the Leaves unstrip'd, for
hast unwrought,

“ Down from the Wood for Oars and
Masts they brought.

On ev'ry side are seen descending down
Long Troops which bring Provisions from
the Town.

* *Classenque revisit. Tum vero Teucri incumbunt, & littore cessas Deducunt toto naves, narat uncta carina. Frondentesque ferunt remos, & robora sylvis Infabricata fugas Studio. Migrantes cernat, totique ex urbe ruentes.*

Æn. 4.

[*English'd thus by Edm. Waller and Sidney Godolphin Esquires.*]

And on the other side the Consequence is such, that the Poet to expose this their Eagerness not so much to the Readers, as to *Dido*. View. She there saw the preparative of her Death; and ev'ry blow the Ax and Hammer strook, went like so many stabs of a Dagger to her very Heart. Can any thing be more moving than the Ingenious application *Virgil* makes?

* What were thy Thoughts, sad *Dido*! on
that day?

How deep thy sighs? When from thy
Tower above

Thou sawst the *Phrygians* in such order
move,

And heardst the tumult of the Clamorous
Sea?

* *Quis tibi tunc, Dido, cernenti talia sensus? Quosve dadas gemitus, cum littora ferrere late Prospiceres ex arce summa?*
Id.

[*Englished thus by the same persons.*]

If in the middle of a great Action, any thing is describ'd, that seems to interrupt and distract the Reader's mind; 'tis requisite that the Effect of these *Descriptions* declare the reason and necessity of them, and that by this means they be embody'd, if I may so say, in the Action. We have one instance of this in the Battle of the Eleventh Book of the *Aeneid*, where the Poet runs out into so curious a *Description* of the Arms and Dress of *Chloerus*.

* Forte facer Cybele Chloereus, olim-
que Sacerdos

Insignis longe Phrygiis fulgebat in
armis;

Spumantemque agitabat equum; quem
pellis ahenis

In plumam squamis auro conferta te-
gebat.

Ipse peregrinâ ferrugine clarus & ostro,

Spicula torquebat Lycio Cortynia cornu:

Aureus ex humeris sonat arcus, & aurea
vati

Cassida, tum croceam chlamydemque
sinusque crepantes

Carbaceos fulvo in nodum collegerat
auro.

Pictus acu tunicas, & barbara tegmin^a
crurum.

* Chloereus, the Priest of Cybele,
did glare

In Phrygian Arms remarkable
afar.

A foaming Steed he rode, whose
hanches case,

Like Feathers, Scales of mingled
Gold and Brass.

He clad in foreign Purple, gall'd
the Foe

With Cretan Arrows from a Ly-
cian Bow.

Gold was that Bow, and Gold
his Helmet too:

Gay were his upper Robes which
loosly flew.

Each Limb was cover'd o're with
something Rare,

And as he fought he Glistred
every where.

[Englished thus by Mr. Stafford in Dryden's
Miscellanies. Part II. p. 491.]

The Judicious Readers might perhaps have been disgusted at this Beauty so carefully described in the very heat of Battle, if the Poet had only made it for their sakes. But 'tis not design'd so much for them as for *Camilla*. This Maid is so charmed at the sight of his Accoutrements, that she is wholly intent upon the Conquest of them. The desire of having them costs her her Life, gives the Victory to the *Trojans*, and breaks all the Measures *Turnus* had taken against *Aeneas*. These are such *Descriptions* as are just and manag'd with discretion. They were not made for their own sakes only, nor are they meer Ornaments.

Seneca is far from this Method. If he has any Recital to make, tho' never so Melancholy and frightful, he begins it with such *Descriptions* as are not only useless, but trifling and foolish. 'Tis requisite we should produce an Instance of it. *Creon* has a Story to tell *Oedipus*, that was the most melancholy, the most frightful, and the most ungrateful that ever could be told a King. He is intreated, he is threatned, and after great signs of Grief for being forc'd to tell him such terrible and afflicting things, he begins his Narration with the *Description* of a Grove, which *Oedipus* knew as well as the *French King* knows the Forests of *Vincennes*, *Boulogne*, and *S. Germain*. But suppose *Oedipus* had never heard of it, was he then at leisure to be told, that it was full of Cypress-
Trees,

Trees, Oaks, Laurel, Myrtle, Alder, and Pine-Trees? That the Cypress-Trees are always green, that the Laurel-Trees bear bitter Berries, that the Alder-Trees were proper to build Ships, which ride on the wide Ocean, &c. That the Oaks of this Grove had their Branches distorted and eat up with Age; that Time had gnawn the Bark off this; that the Roots of *That* could no longer support it, and that it would tumble down, were it not prop'd up by the Trunk of another Tree. His *Description* of all this is in these Words :

* Far off from Thebes, where Dirce's sacred Well

With silent streams bedews the Neighbouring Plain,

* Est procul ab urbe locus illicibus niger, Dircea cirea, &c. Sen. Oedip. Act. 3.

There is a Grove with darkeſt ſhades o'er ſpread.
Here Cypress liſting up its buſhy head
Graces the Wood with never fading Green.
Here quite worn out with Age an Oak diſplays
Its crooked ſapleſs Arms; the Bark of This
Devouring Time has gnawn; The Root of That
Sits looſe, and throws it 'gainſt another Tree.
Here bitter Lawrel, limber Oſiers grow,
Soft Myrtle to the Paphian Goddeſs ſacred,
Tough Alder fit for Ships and Maſſy Oars,
The Loſty Pine that dares the ſtrongeſt Storm,
And turns its knotty ſide againſt the Wind.
I'th middle ſtands a Tree of mighty Bulk
Protecting all the leſſer Under-wood,
And throwing all abroad its ſpreading Boughs,
Defends at once, and ſhades the ſubject Grove.

[Engliſh'd thus by J. Hoadley of Cath. Hall.

C H A P. III.

Of Comparisons or Similes.

WE very commonly explain our selves by *Similes*, and make use of them, the better to make others apprehend what we propose, and to give them a just Idea thereof. There are two Essential Qualities belonging to them, the First is, that the thing we make use of be better known, and easier to apprehend, than that we would make known by its assistance; and the second is, that there be an exact Relation between them.

As for that which concerns the Knowledge of the thing we make use of in a *Simile*, there is no need that we should have seen it with our Eyes. 'Tis enough that we have the Testimony of common Opinion only on our side; tho' we know at the same time 'tis either false or Fabulous. The *Phoenix*, the *Harpyes*, and the Adventures of *Hercules*, are as proper for this purpose, as a *Cock*, or a *Dog*, or the Actions of *Julius Caesar*. Nor should we condemn some Excesses that are commonly to be met with in these *Similes*, as if they destroyed the justness of them: but we should consider that in this case there is an *Hyperbole* added to the *Simile*. 'Tis therefore allowable to liken a Valiant Captain to a Torrent that bears down all before it; to a Thunderbolt that meets with no resistance, and to a Lyon in the midst of a Flock of Sheep. But we are most liable to be deceiv'd in this Justness, if we look upon *Similes* only as Ornaments; for then we may neglect the justness which is Essential to them, and mind nothing else but a Lustre and Beauty, which has nothing to do with the Essence. That we may not be deceived therein, we must be acquainted with the Design of the Poet, and the Nature of the things he makes use of. Without this, one is in danger to be mistaken, and to imagine that a just and suitable *Simile* is both false and vicious. Let us now see some instances of this.

Virgil describing the Beauty of *Ascanius*, compares him to a precious Stone set in Gold, and to Ivory enchac'd in Box. It is true, that whoever imagines *Virgil* would say this young Prince was as handsome as a piece of Ivory enchac'd in Box, would find this *Simile* to be very flat: and would have reason to complain that the Poet lessens an Idea that he ought to raise. But we shall find that this *Simile* is just, if we would discover wherein it consists, and observe, that the Author has distinguish'd two things in *Ascanius*.

The

The one is the shining of his comely head when bare: And the other is the Colour of his Complexion, and that of his hair. The first is compared to a precious Stone enclac'd in Gold.

* See how the Trojan Youth, his head all bare,

Does like a Gem enclac'd in Gold appear.

* Dardanius caput ecce
puer detectus honestum
Qualis gemma micat ful-
vum quæ dividit aurum,
Æneid. 10.

This is both just and noble. But the whiteness of a Face would have been but pitifully expressed by a precious Stone. It is with a great deal more Justice compar'd to the Whiteness of Ivory, and the Colour of his Hair to that of Box.

* Or like to Ivory inclos'd in Box :

So shine the Youth's dishevel'd Yellow Locks

Upon his milky Neck.

* Vel quale per artem, In-
clusum buxo aut Oricia te-
rebintho Lucet ebur : fufus
cervix cui lactea crinea
Accipit. *Ibid.*

In the Sixth Book there is a Comparison very like this last. A Bough of Gold, which grew upon an Oak, the Poet compares to *Mistleto*. He would have taken off very much from the Lustre of this precious Bough, if his design had been to express this Lustre by that of the *Mistleto*. But this Property of Gold is very well known, and the bare naming of this Metal raises in us an Idea of it that is lovely and dazling enough: It stands in no need of being heightened by a *Comparison*. 'Tis a great deal more Wonderful and Extraordinary to see a Tree shoot forth a branch of Gold, of so different a Nature from its own. This therefore calls for a *Simile*: and is the Subject of that which *Virgil* made. He does not fail making mention of the Diversity of Natures that is between Green and Yellow *Mistleto*, and the Oak which produces it at a time when it has the least strength, and looks more like a dead Trunk than a living Plant.

* Just as upon some Sapless Oak does grow
Its midst of Winter verdant Mistleto :

* Quale solet Sylvis, &c.
Æn. 6.

We may likewise say that this *Simile* is a Proof that Nature produces some things extraordinary, and renders the Fiction more probable. For *Virgil* does sometimes make this use of the *Similes* he employs. This is manifest from *Aeneas's* accidental meeting with a *Carthaginian* Damsel, that was in Armour and a hunting. The Poet compares her to *Amazon*, and to a *Spartan* Lass. These two Quotations prove that the meeting with a Damsel hunting in the Forest of *Carthage* is to be allow'd as exactly probable. This

Simile then is a great deal better, more juſt, and more ingenious than if he had compar'd this Damſel to *Diana*; tho' this laſt would have ſeem'd more noble, and have preſented it ſelf ſooner to the mind.

If it ſeems natural to compare a Huntreſs to *Diana*, it ſeems no leſs ſo to compare a Valiant Commander to a Lyon. Should not *Virgil* have done his *Hero* rather than *Turnus* this Honour? Yet he does the contrary. Perhaps 'tis becauſe the Character of the Lyon is Anger. He is the emblem of it: And

* Fertur Prometheus addere principi Limo coactus particulam undique Deſectam, & infani Leonis Vim Stomacho appoſuiſſe noſtro. *Lib. 1. Od. 16.*

* *Horace* informs us that when *Prometheus* form'd Man out of that which was proper to each Animal, that which he borrow'd from the Lyon was his Anger. The ſimilitude then of this Animal is not at all ſuitable to the Valour of *Aeneas*, but a great deal

more proper for that of *Turnus*. So that when the Poet did it he was not at all ignorant of the Terms, *Anger* and *Fury*. He makes uſe of theſe very Expreſſions, when he likens *Turnus* to *Mars*, to whom he never compares *Aeneas*.

We ſhould not make Compariſons between Noble and Ignoble, between great and inconfiderable things. But what is baſe and ignoble at one time and in one Country, is not always ſo in others. We are apt to ſmile at *Homer's* comparing *Ajax* to an Aſs in his *Iliad*. Such a Compariſon now adays would be indecent and ridiculous; becauſe it would be indecent and ridiculous for a perſon of Quality to ride upon ſuch a Steed. But heretofore this Animal was in better repute: Kings and Princes did not diſdain the Beaſt ſo much as meer Tradeſmen do in our times. 'Tis juſt the ſame with many other *Similes*, which in *Homer's* time were allowable. We ſhould now pity a Poet, that ſhould be ſo ſilly and ridiculous as to compare a Hero to a piece of Fat: Yet *Homer* does it in a Compariſon he makes of *Ulyſſes*. And the *H. Ghost* himſelf, which cannot be ſuppoſed to have a wrong ſenſe of things, begins the Encomium of *David* by this Idea. * *As is the Fat taken away from the Peace offering, ſo was David choſen out of the Children of Iſrael.*

* Eccl. 47. 2.

The reaſon of this is, that in theſe Primitive times, wherein the Sacrifices of the true Religion as well as of the falſe, were living Creatures; the Blood and the Fat were reckon'd the moſt noble, the moſt auguſt, and the moſt holy things.

Compariſons do not leſſen the Paſſion of thoſe that hear them, but in the perſons that ſpeak them they generally denote ſuch Reflections, as do not uſually proceed from a diſturb'd and unquiet mind. So that it rarely happens that they ſeem natural and probable in the mouth of a paſſionate perſon. Yet obſerve what the enrag'd *Medea* ſays in *Seneca*.

* Not

* Not time it self shall cool my glowing

Rage,

Which grows in strength still as it grows
in age :

* Nunquam meus cessabit
in poenas furor, Crescetq;
semper, &c. *Med. Al.* 3.

Cruel as beasts, or Scylla, it shall be,
Or as Charybdis whose devouring Sea
Sucks up th' Ionian and Sicilian Main,
Which meet, and shove each other back
again ;

So scorching and so hot shall be my Ire,
Titan from Ætna ne'er belch'd half the
Fire.

[Englished thus by J. Hoadly of Cath. Hall.]

Such learned Passions are seldom violent. A Woman who takes notice that *Charybdis* swallows up the two Seas of *Ionium* and *Sicily*; and that the Flames, which *Ætna* throws out, are belched by a Giant that is overwhelmed with the weight of that Mountain, thinks upon something else beside her *Anger*.

CHAP. IV.

Concerning Sentences.

THIS Word *Sententia*, in Latin is very Ambiguous. It signifies that part of Poetry, which we now treat of in this Book under the Name of *Sentiments* or *Thoughts*. It likewise signifies a Sentence of few Words, that contains some profitable *Thought* or other for the conduct of human Life; such as in these Instances :

* Discite Justitiam moniti
& non temere Divos,
Æn. 6.

* Learn to be just, and don't the Gods con-
temn. The habits we contract in our youth are of great Mo-
ment, &c.

The Word *Sentence* in our Language does not fall under the first of these two Significations. Therefore in this Chapter we shall only take it in the latter Sence, and understand by it, a Moral In-
struction couch'd in a few Words.

Sentences then render Poems very useful, and besides that, they have I know not what kind of Lustre that pleases us. So that, it seems natural to imagine, that the more any Work is embellish'd with them, the more it deserves that general Approbation, which *Horace* promises to those, that have the Art to mix the Profitable

with

with the *Pleasant*. But there is not any one Vertue, but what is attended with some dangerous Vice or other.

Too many Sentences make the Poem sink into a Stile that is too *Philosophical*; and cast it into a Seriousness that is less becoming the Majesty of a Poem, than the Study of the Learned, and the Gravity of the Dogmatical. These *Thoughts* have in their own Nature a certain kind of calm Wisdom, that is contrary to the Passions, and with which they inspire us: They are such as make the Passions languish as well in the Auditors, as in the speakers. To conclude, the Affectation of speaking by *Sentences* is the cause that many foolish and trifling ones are spoken, or that they are spoken by such, whose present State and Condition does not allow them to be so prudent and learned. We have a great many of these vicious instances in *Seneca's Tragedies*.

The misfortunes of *Hecuba* in the loss of her Kingdom, Husband, Children, and Liberty, render'd her no longer capable of any thing else, but Barking, Howling, and Biting, to use the Poet's Dialect, who for this reason have judiciously transform'd her into a Bitch. From whence then proceed these grave and moderate Sentences, and these fine Moral Reflections?

* Quicunque regno fedit,
& magna potens Dominatur
Aula, &c. *Tras. Act. I.*

* *Let those, who sit on Thrones, and bear
a sway*

*In Courts, who think the Gods will always
be*

*Propitious to them, and maintain their
State;*

*Look down on mine, and Troy's unhappy
Fate.*

*From these sad turns of Fortune they may
learn*

*Themselves may die like Slaves, tho' Mon-
archs born.*

Certainly these are not the *Thoughts* of this *Hecuba*, whose name is borrow'd here. They are the *Thoughts* of *Seneca* the *Philosopher* writing at quiet in his Study, and meditating upon the Misfortunes to which the Height of Fortune exposes us. The only interest he takes upon him, is to draw from thence useful Maxims, and this fine Moral, which the glittering Thrones, and the dreadful fall of the most puissant Monarchies supply'd him with.

These are such *Sentences* as are ill manag'd: Let us now take notice of others that are as ill employ'd, and yet are moreover cold, ridiculous, and absurd.

Oedipus seeking out for a Remedy to succour *Thebes*, that is reduced to the very brink of ruin, is forc'd at last to conjure up the Ghost

Ghost of King *Laius*. He orders *Creon* to be present at that Ceremony, and afterwards to come and give him an account of it. The Ghost appear'd, discover'd the remedy according as it was requir'd, and *Creon* comes to give the King an account of it. He begins with declaring, that he cannot tell how to utter his mind; and by *Sentences* he makes this foolish Declaration to him:

* *We're loth to live, when by the nauseous
Pill*

*Our health must be restor'd. Kings take
it ill*

*They should be told, what they sometimes
require.*

*Let me be silent: That's a small desire
No King can well refuse. If that's deny'd,
What can be granted me?*

* Ubi rursus est medicina
sanari piger, &c. *Oedip.*
Act. 3.

A Man must have a strange fancy to speak *Sententiously*, that makes his Personages speak thus upon such an Occasion. When he is upon declaring the only Remedy that could save a State, which his silence would certainly ruin; is it not a great piece of Impertinence to say, *That the least favour that could be begged of a King, is to hold ones peace; and that if it be not lawful to conceal this Remedy, nothing is lawful?* Yet *Oedipus*, who at the first denial made him by *Creon*, was so incens'd against him, * as to threaten him with Death; when he should have been incens'd more against him for his persevering in so unreasonable a denial, and for his alledging such foolish reasons, as would make one believe he jeer'd him to his face: Yet, I say, as if *Oedipus* were of the Poets own mind, and had a greater Inclination for *Sentences*, than for the safety of his Subjects; he seems to be wholly pacified, since he has the patience to hear *Creon* say so many fine ones, and is willing to utter such as well as he. And they too are of the same stamp with those we have already seen. This is his answer, *That* * *oftimes silence does more harm to Kings and States than even speaking does; and that lastly, † he is no obedient Subject, that speaks not when Commanded.*

* Irane & Glutis publicis
indicium obres. . . . Miteris
Erebo vile pro cunctis
caput, Arcana sacri vobis
ni relegis tua. *Ind.*

* Sæpe vel linguâ magis,
Regi atque regno mutâ
libertas obest.

† Imperia solvit, qui tunc
jussus loqui.

The first Remedy to cure these Indecencies, is to imagine we hear the true Persons talking naturally together, and to suppose our selves in their places, and see what we would say upon such an Occasion. By this means a Man will learn to use *Sentences* seldomer, and to retrench those, that being not necessary to raise the Idea of
that

that which he would represent, are only dress'd up for a show. He will likewise learn to strip a great many *Thoughts* of that Ambitious Air, which forms a general Precept out of a Trifle. And he will say upon these occasions; *I command you to speak, do you Obey*: And not like *Seneca*, *be that does not speak when commanded, does not do as we Command him*. In short he will know how to manage the *Sentences* he makes use of better, and how to render them more just.

The second Remedy is, so to express these *Sentences*, that they be not too apparent; and that the Effect of them be felt before they

are discern'd. This is * *Petronius's* Opinion. He is in the right in referring us to our *Virgil*: For this Poet is admirable in the Art of inserting *Sentences*.

* Curandum est, ne Sententiae emineant extra corpus orationis expressae, sed intexto vestibus colore nireant. *Homerus testis & Lyrici, Romanusque Virgilius, & Horatii curiosa felicitas. Petron.*

But before we speak of these *disguised Sentences*, let us make this Reflection upon the others: That they are generally spoken either by a grave and tragical person, or else by one of the common People.

Hitherto we have spoken concerning the first of these. And to that which we have already said about it, we add, that the Poet should make choice either of such as may excite to Action, and encourage those to whom they are spoken, such as this for instance;

* Audentes fortuna juvat.
Æn. 10.

* *Fortune assists the Brave and Daring Souls:*

Or such as may augment the Passion, such as these two figurative ones, of the same stile;

* Quid non mortalia pectora
cogis Auri sacra fames?
Æn. 3.

* *Vile Avarice! What bold Attempts dost thou
Excite poor Mortals too?*

† Improbe Amor quid non
mortalia pectora cogis?
Æn. 4.

† *All conquering Love! Who can resist thy sway?*

They are made use of quite another way with respect to the Vulgar, and the persons of *Comedy*. They are often brought in speaking *Sententious*ly, or (to speak more properly) in *Proverbs* and *Puns*. The reason of this Difference is, that the grave Persons invent what they say, according as the present occasion requires; so that their *Sentences* are so many nice or judicious Reflections, which should be inspir'd into them by Objects that are present. Now it seldom happens, that Objects, which are present, inspire

inspire these sorts of general *Thoughts* into passionate and interested persons. 'Tis this that ought to regulate the use of them in Poems; and which Art and Nature have taught *Virgil* to practise. But the *Vulgar* never invent, they only say over again by rote what they have heard others say often, and what one may suppose they themselves have said an hundred times over: So that their *Sentences* cost them no Reflection, nor the least premeditation. Besides, they meet with no passion, which they interrupt contrary to Art: But they only raise laughter, and that is more conformable to the Art and Air of *Comedy*.

CHAP. V.

Of Disguis'd Sentences.

WE are now come to shew that the *Sentences* should be disguised; we shall in some instances of *Virgil* propose the Methods whereby he has made these Disguises. The most general Method is, not to declare the Moral Instruction in Universal Terms, but to make an Application of it to the Action on foot. This, for instance, is a pure *Sentence*, and declar'd in universal terms: *Those who hate their brethren in this life, shall be severely punished for't in Hell.* *Virgil* applys it to his Action by saying, that *Aeneas* being in Hell, met there among the damn'd such as had hated their Brethren here on Earth.

• Hic quibus invisi fratres
dum vita manebat, Inchoasti
poenam expectant. *Æn.* 6.

There are several ways of disguising *Sentences*, and of applying them to the Action, sometimes the Consequence alone has this effect, when the Poet has skill enough to manage it well. In the Second Book of the *Æneid*, the *Trojans* were at a stand what they should do with the Wooden-horse, that the *Grecians* had left behind them *Aeneas*, that tells the story, relates the Opinions of several considerable persons, of *Thymetes*, *Capys*, *Laocoon* and others, and therewith he mixes the Discourses of the People, who in the Contrariety of their Opinions knew not on what to resolve. We here see nothing but a bare Recital of that which happen'd among the *Trojans* upon this Occasion; This may be conceiv'd without a *Sentence*, and without a general and universal Proposition. But if this *Thought* be taken from what follows and consider'd alone; it is without doubt a *Sentence*, and a discourse that shews us in general the

the Nature and the restless Inclinations of a People, that deliberate in a hurry, and know not on what to resolve:

* Scinditur incertum studia
in contraria vulgus.

* *The Wavering Mob can't in their Votes
agree*

Some are for this, some that :

It is no matter by whom, and how many these sentences are utter'd :

* Tu ne cede malis sed
contra audentior ito Quo
tua te fortuna finet. *Æn. 6.*

* *Ne're faint beneath the weight of any
Ill :*

*But boldly go, where're thy Fortune
calls.*

† Quo Fata trahunt retrahuntque, sequamur. Quicquid erit, superanda omnis fortuna ferendo est. *Æn. 5.*

† *Let's follow Fate where-ere it leads
the way ;*

*Let what will come, Patience will take
away*

The Pressure of it.

A Sentence is well expressed any of these ways: And these Thoughts taken from the places where they are, and consider'd without the Consequence, as I here represent them, are true Sentences, and Moral Precepts, which fortifie us against all manner of unlucky Accidents, and against the Oppositions of Fortune. But in the Series of the Poem, they are, properly speaking, neither Sentences, nor general Precepts, but advices given to *Æneas* upon particular occasions.

The Latin Tongue has an advantage over ours in this, by means of the Ellipsis. In Latin 'tis often as elegant to suppress, as 'tis to express a word. So that, suppressing the Word that makes the particular Application, one leaves the Thought in that kind of ingenious Ambiguity, which we observ'd in the foregoing Examples, where there is nothing to be understood. Here you have an Instance of this Ellipsis. The Trojans reduc'd to their last shifts by Turnus, see *Æneas* advancing to succour them. The Poet says, *Spes addita suscitât iras*. This Expression signifies equally, either in particular, that the Hope They recess'd rally'd and increas'd their Courage; or in general, that the Hope of approaching and certain Succour raises mens Courage, and arms them with new Vigor. If the Poet had added but one Word, and said, *Ollis spes addita suscitât iras*; The first sence would have been clearly expressed, and it would not have been a pure Sentence, but the Application of a Sentence. The leaving out of this Word makes it a perfect Sentence. But this leaving out the word being so natural, that we can easily understand it; reduces the Sentence into the body of

of the Discourse, and prevents it, as I may so say, from being upon the ramble. This is one of those fine and delicate Unions which *Perfius* requires.

The second way of disguising the Sentences, is by applying them sensibly to the Particular Action. This is done by drawing a particular Conclusion from an Argument founded upon a general Proposition, which we do not express. An instance thereof is this. *Dido* complains, because she did not set upon *Aeneas*, whilst it was in her power; and she starts this Objection against it: That such an Assault would have been as dangerous to her as to her Enemy. *Verum anceps pugna fuerat fortuna*. One may answer her in this Argument: He that is resolv'd to die, has nothing to fear; I have nothing then to fear, since I am resolved to die. It would have been ridiculous to have expressed all this in a Poem, and to make one as passionate as *Dido* then was, to argue the Case thus. 'Twas requisite then that one or other of these Propositions should be made choice of; each of them is intelligible enough. The mind of the Composer does usually determine this without Reflection, and he takes either that side to which his over serious Wisdom, or to which his own Imagination judiciously warm'd, and transformed into that of the person who Acts and Speaks, inclines him. Thus the Sage and Sententious *Seneca* would not have fail'd taking the general proposition. *What signifies?* He would have said, *he fears nothing that is resolv'd to die*. *Virgil* has follow'd his ordinary Flame and Stile, and says, *Fuisset! Quem metus moritura*.

Seneca very frequently in his Tragedies, where the Moral should be less apparent than in the *Epopoea*, utters his Thoughts Morally and Sententiously; and *Virgil* on the other hand, in the Epick Poem, and in places that are design'd for Morality, conceals his Sentences under Figures, and particular Applications. This Tragedian in his design of joyning what is Profitable to what is Pleasant, has so manag'd things, that he quite hides the Pleasant, and stifles the Passion that should be predominant, that he may foist in a Sentence, the effect whereof is frequently nothing else but the offending those that make impartial Reflections thereon; as in that we have already taken notice of in his *Oedipus*. Whilst *Virgil*, retaining in the Sentence, he makes use of, all that is Profitable and instructive according as he is oblig'd, mixes therewith the Lustre and the Tenderness of the Passions with a judgment and skill that is peculiar to him.

If any thing lays us under an obligation of embracing Vertue, and abandoning Vice, 'tis doubtless this Maxim, viz. *That the chiefest and best Recompence of a Good Action is Vertue itself, and the good Habits we contract by our good Actions; as on the contrary, Vicious Actions imprint on us the Love of Vices and*

the Habits of committing them, which sometimes lead us into a kind of fatal Necessity. The Habits take such deep rooting in us, that Death it self does not make us relinquish them: We preserve to Eternity the Affections and Inclinations which we have contracted in our life-time, and with which we die. So that those who are so unhappy as to leave this World with their Vicious inclinations about them, are afflicted with unspeakable torments, when they come to see the deformity of those Vices which they cannot divest themselves of, and the Beauty of Justice and Vertue, from which they are banish'd for ever. *Virgil* teaches us all this in several *Sentences* that he disguises after a most admirable manner.

The first thing is: That the *Manners* and the *Habits* are the best reward of good Actions. He tempers this excellent precept with so much *Tenderness*, that 'tis hard to say, whether in this passage he makes use of the *Profitable*, or the *Pleasant*. A young Nobleman, *Eurialus*, the most amiable, and the most beloved of all the *Trojans*, meets with an important occasion of serving his Prince, to which nothing but his own Vertue obliges him. He embraces the opportunity with all earnestness, and is going to expose himself to a Death, that perhaps might be the heart-breaking of his Mother. She loved this Son so passionately, that she was the only Woman that followed him into *Italy*, without fearing the Dangers and the Fatigues which kept all the rest behind at *Sicily*. *Eurialus*, that lov'd his Mother as dearly, dares not take his leave of her, because he could not away with the tenderness of her tears. He therefore recommends her to young *Ascanius*. *Ascanius* receives her into his protection: And on both sides they express all the Passion, which a great Poet was able to inspire them with. 'Tis in the midst of these passions, that a grave old Man with tears in his Eyes, embraces *Eurialus* and his dear friend *Nisus*; prays for their success, and for a reward of so much Vertue, promises them such a one as we have been discoursing of.

* *Humeros dextraeque te-
nebat Amborum, & vul-
tum lacrymis atque ora
rigabat. Quae vobis, &c.
Æn. 9.*

* *With this he took the hand of either
Boy,*

*Embrac'd them closely both, and wept for
Joy.*

*Ye brave young men, what equal gifts can
we,*

*What Recompence for such desert, decree?
The greatest sure, and best you can receive,
The Gods, your Vertue, and your Fame
will give.*

[*English'd thus by Mr. Dryden in his Miscellan. Part II. pag. 15.*]

The second Sentence is this, that when we die, we carry along with us the habits we have contracted here. The Poet makes mention of the troublesome and tormenting habits, upon the occasion of those Lovers which *Aeneas* meets with labouring under the same Miseries they did before their Death.

Cura non ipsa in morte relinquunt.

And he says as much concerning the pleasant Inclinations, when in the *Elysian Fields* *Aeneas* meets with Heroes that had the same Diversions there, which they enjoy'd whilst here on Earth.

— *Que gratia Currum
Armorumque fuit vivis, que cura nitentes
Pascere equos: eadem sequitur tellure repōstos.*

The Poet makes a particular Application of this last passage by adding the Words *Chariots* and *Horses*. One might entirely re-trench them, and that which remains be a pure and perfect Sentence. *Que gratia fuit vivis, que cura, eadem sequitur tellure repōstos.* The preceding passage is pure and general in the Terms, and in the Expression. *Cura non ipsa in morte relinquunt.* 'Tis the Consequence alone that renders it singular, and reduces it into the body of the Action. These two particular Applications do in the general say the same thing, and teach us; that *we eternally preserve the same passions and habits, which we have contracted whilst living, unless we relinquish them before we die.*

This is likewise what our Poet teaches us, when among the Torments of his Hell, he mentions that which the Damn'd suffer there at the sight of the Justice and Vertue they have despis'd, and of which they have eternally depriv'd themselves. * The miserable *Theseus*, says *Virgil*, is in Hell, and there will for ever be; and *Pblegias* more miserable than he, is always calling to those about him; *Hark ye*, cries he to the Damn'd, *and learn what 'tis to be just and pious.*

* Sedit æternumque sedebit Infelix Theseus: Phlegiasque miserrimus omnes Admonet, & magna scatur voce per umbras: Discite Justitiam moniti, & non temnere Divos. *Æn. 6.*

This passage presents us with a Sentence disguis'd a quite different way from those we have been discoursing of. For the former are concealed under the Expression that contains them: But this last, on the other hand, is not contained in the Expression that presents it to us. Who is there but at first sight will take this Verse of *Virgil* for a Sentence, and for an Admonition to be just and pious?

Learn to be just, and don't the Gods Contemn.

In

In truth a Man would not question but this was the Poet's design; if he only considers his person, and that of the Readers; and he cannot say but that he has given it full force: For to cause this Sentence to be spoken in this frightful place of Torment, where Men are punish'd severely for neglecting to practise it, must needs render it very moving and convincing.

Eut when, without considering the person of the Reader, one Reflects upon the Consequence, and minds only him that speaks, and the persons to whom he speaks: 'Tis no such easie matter to imagine, that *Virgil's* design was to inspire Piety and Justice into Souls, that are no longer capable thereof, being condemn'd to suffer Eternal Torments in a place from whence they must never depart. The Poet's meaning then is something else, since he makes these words be said in a Passage where nothing but Crimes and Punishments are his Theme. The Torments of Sense, denoted by the Chains, the Whips, the Wheels, and the Flames, are not the greatest. The Conscience forms such, to which the others are not to be compar'd. And as our Author has said, that External things are not even in this life the highest Recompence of Vertuous Actions; he would have us likewise understand, that 'tis the same Case with punishments, and that our Soul has no greater a Tormenter than its own self.

* *Magne pater Divum
vos punire Tyrannos Non
alia ratione velis, &c.
Sat. 3.*

* *Perseus*, who has taken many things from *Virgil*, may as well have taken this *Thought* from him too. This Poet could not imagin any dreadfuller torment, than for a Man to have a view of Vertue, when

he lies under such a fatal Necessity, as to be no longer able to pursue it. *Plato* says, if Vertue could be seen with the Eyes of the Body, it would charm all the World. What torment then must those Men needs suffer, who see it more evidently than with their Bodily Eyes, and are so far from being able to enjoy its Charms, that they see themselves ty'd down inseparably to the contrary Vices, with which they are forc'd to make this *Comparison*, when in the midst of their Torments they are call'd upon,

Learn to be just, and don't the Gods condemn?

C H A P. VI.

Concerning several other Thoughts.

THE *Points* and the neat *Turns* are in the *Pleasant*, what the *Sentences* are in the *Profitable*. Their Lustre dazzles young Poets, and others too that have more Fancy than Judgment. The *Sentences* cool the Action, and retard its Motions by an unreasonable Gravity: And the *Points* destroy the Majesty of a Poem by pretty conceits that are unbecoming it. Sometimes these fine Words produce forc'd and ridiculous *Thoughts*, when a Poet would prepare them, and start up occasions to make use of them. In the *Troad* of *Seneca*, *Agamemnon* falls out with *Pyrrhus*, and hits him in the Teeth, * that the place of his Natiuity was surrounded with Water. * *Inclusa fluct.*

† *Pyrrhus* the Grandson of *Thetis* replies, † *Nempe cognati maris.* that these Waters were his Grandmothers:

From whence 'tis concluded that they cannot prejudice his Island, nor set bounds to his Empire; since in some sort they belong to it. This was an Ingenious Repartee: But upon what account does *Agamemnon* upbraid *Pyrrhus* for being born in an Island? This King of Kings would never have said thus to *Pyrrhus*, had not the Poet foresaw, what this youngster would have answered him.

'Tis easier redressing this fault, than 'tis that of the *Sentences*; because the *Sentences* and the Precepts of Morality are necessary to the *Epopée*, whose sole design is to instruct Men, which cannot be done without these *Sentences*. They therefore cannot be excluded. One must learn how to make use of them, and this requires a great deal of Art, a great deal of Fancy, and a mature and solid Judgment. But the *Points* are so little necessary, that one may quite exclude them from a Poem. Our Poets have done so: Among so many *Sentences*, there are so few *Points*, and pretty Conceits, that one may suppose that even those that happen to be there, are such as crept in without the Poets being aware of them. *Virgil* was too ingenious not to meet with a great many *Points* that lay in his way, but he has made no use of them, and by consequence one may presume he wholly rejected them.

The Amplification of the things one speaks of belongs likewise to the same Genius; and those that are in love with glaring and fine *Thoughts* are subject to a vicious Amplification. In the *Thebaid* of *Statius* *Oedipus* renounces the Innocency he had retain'd

even in the midst of the Crimes he had committed, and he takes them all upon himself, only upon a desire he had of expressing his great Kindness for his daughter *Antigone*. He had Murder'd his Father, and marry'd his Mother without knowing it. He was severely punished for it. But when he saw *Antigone* did not abandon him in his miseries, he cries out: *O my dear Daughter, I am well enough satisfied with my Commission of Parricide and Incest, since 'tis to these that I am beholden for such a Daughter.* The Genius of *Statius*, and the frantick desire he had of making all things look great, is such, that he chooses rather to contradict himself, than not have his humour. When he would amplify the Valour of *Capaneus*, *Jupiter* scarce thinks his whole Godhead to be Match enough for this great Man: And after he had darted one Thunder-bolt at him, he is ready to cast another. And when he comes to speak of the Great Power of *Jupiter*, this very God smiles at the Vanity and Weakness of *Capaneus*, and disdains him so much, that he could scarce persuade himself to take his Bolt in his hand to crush him with it in pieces.

The affected Study and Knowledge of all Arts and Sciences, is another dangerous Rock to the Vanity of Writers. Though a Poet should know ev'ry thing; yet 'tis not with a design he should vent his Science by retail, and let the World see the Extent of his mind: But that he may say nothing that should argue him ignorant, and that he may speak correctly upon several Occasions. 'Tis requisite likewise that these Occasions be natural, and such as appear unavoidable, and unsought for. We have seen one instance of this in the Doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul, which *Virgil* has so judiciously and necessarily placed in his Sixth Book.

'Tis so easie to make use of all manner of Terms of Art in a Poem, that a Man must be one of little Thought and a mean Soul, that shall be Ambitious of the praise of having done it. There needs only reading over a Book of the Art one would speak of; or conversing with an Artificer: And after that to make some one or other that understands it see what we have writ about it. An Author will be a pitiful Creature, if he does not attain his end by this means: But he will not be much the more learned for having succeeded therein. A great Poet will never stoop to so low and useles a Vanity in an *Epick Poem*. Let him indeed learn, and know every thing; but then let him make use of this his knowledge as we before advis'd; and let him do it by using the most Common, and the most intelligible Terms he can. The minds of his Readers must never be burden'd, when there is no occasion for it: The Passions and the Pleasure of a Poem require an entire freedom from every thing else,

The desire of appearing Learned, makes a Poem smell of it from one end to the other. We shall see Women, that in a violent Passion will make Reflections on things, which in all Probability they are wholly ignorant of; and on which, though they were acquainted with them, they ought not in the Condition they are in to spend the least Thought. These Poetical *Heroine's* are vers'd in *History*, *Mythology*, *Geography*, a great many curious *Properties of Nature*, and very fine *Lessons in Morality*: In a word, they are not ignorant, in their very Passions, of whatever the Poet knows in his Study, amidst his Books and common places. If they complain of any Cruelty, they name ye all the cruel Tyrants that ever were, and know without the least mistake, wherein the wicked Inclination of each Person did consist.

† 'Tis not enough for them to mention *Bustiris* and *Diomedes*; they must needs add the *Altars* of the one, and the *Horses* of the other. They would think it a shame

† Quis Colchus, aut quis sedes incertæ Scythæ Commisit? &c. *Troas*, Act. 5.

only to know that the *Scythians* are cruel; they must likewise know that they have no fix'd Habitation, but are *here* to Day, and *there* to Morrow. This is what *Seneca's Andromache* knew; and on which she reflected even during the sad Recital of the Death of her only Son, little *Astyanax*, who was thrown from the top of a Tower. If one considers on all this, one can never be affected with these learned Complaints: And if the Audience never think thereon, to what purpose are they us'd.

The *Madness of Medea* is no less learned than the *Sadness of Andromache*. This Mad-Woman threatens to burn the King of *Corinth's* Palace: The Flame whereof should be seen off the Promontory of *Malea*, which lies at the farther end of the *Peloponnesus*. But this is not all; this Passion would not have been learned enough, had not *Medea* added, that this Promontory is inaccessible, that the Rocks which surround it with *Water-Lilies*, oblige the Ships to go a great way about, and that they are forc'd to sail at such a distance off it, that their Voyage by this means is so much the longer. Sometimes likewise, not being able to express these things by *Circumlocutions*, so as to be understood, all shall be included in an *Epithet*, an *Adverb*, or some other word, and then let the Reader guess at the meaning. But Poems are not invented for this.

I shall here make this one Reflection more; that, though we are to avoid *Ostentation*, and never to affect appearing Learned: Yet we must not fall into the contrary fault, and appear ignorant, as *Scævus* has done in the beginning of his *Thebaid*. He undertakes the War of *Eteocles* and *Polynices*, and before he enters upon the *Medea*, he relates all that happen'd at the founding of

Thebes, and from thence down to their Times. He expresses this in a Doubt; and he asks his *Muses*, whether he must begin his Recital with the Rape of *Europa*. This Doubt is a sign of so gross an Ignorance in the Art, that it betrays a Man's want of Judgment, when he gives his Readers such a disadvantageous Character of himself.

C H A P. VII.

Of the Expression.

THE *Expression* should be suitable to the Subjects one treats on, and consequently should be Beautiful, Noble, and August in the *Epick Poem*, as well as in *Tragedy*. But 'tis very observable that this Beauty, and this Grandeur is of a very large extent, and like a *Genus* divides it self into several *Species*. This will be easily conceiv'd, if one recollect what we have already said in the fourth Book concerning the Character of the *Hero*, and of the whole *Poem* in general. The Characters of *Achilles*, *Ulysses*, and *Aeneas* are very great, and yet differ very much from each other. The *Iliad* consists altogether in Battles, in Anger, and in a continual Commotion without Bounds and measure. The *Odysses* on the contrary is full of nothing else but Prudence, Patience, and Wisdom. So that the Learned observe there is a considerable difference in the Style and Verses of these two Poems. There is a great deal of Flegm in the *Odysses*: But the *Iliad* is all over one continual Flame. The *Aeneid* should be a great deal softer than the two *Greek Poems*.

Beside this first Distinction, each part of which comprehends an entire Poem, there are likewise inferiour Distinctions, which divide each Poem into its *Episodes* and lesser parts. For though the same Character should be predominant, yet it should not take up the *Whole* of the Poem, there are many Passages very different from one another. This alters the Style so

* Interdum vocem Comœdia tollit, Iratusque Chremes tumido delitigat ore: Et Tragicus plerumque dolet sermone pedestri. *Hor. Poet.*

far, that * sometimes Anger makes Comedy wear the *Buskin*, and sometimes Sorrow makes Tragedy throw it off. This puts me in mind of a Queen I saw once upon the Stage, who complain'd of her long Misfortunes in a Style that was quite opposite

opposite thereto. She made a comparison between them, and the Happiness of her former Years: And she compar'd these different States to the several Seasons of the Year; but in such a manner, that she only insisted on the Description of the Beauty and Pleasantness of the *Spring*. And when after a long train of these fine things, which inspir'd nothing but Pleasure and Joy, she pass'd on to the Description of *Winter*, and when one would have expected to hear at last something that was conformable to the present Condition of this unfortunate Princess, she gave us the Reverse of it. She made a Description of *Winter*, not by representing the melancholy part of it, but by making an elegant *Amplification* on all the Beauties of *Spring*, which the *Winter* wanted. All this was express'd in such choice Phrases, which certainly cost the Poet those Studies and sleepless Nights, which

* *Horace* condemns in those that make Complaints.

* Nec nocte paratum Plorabit qui me volet incurvasse querela. *Hor. Poet.*

'Tis not enough to express the *Passion* one treats of well; 'tis moreover requisite that one prevent it not by any *Description* that may at first give quite contrary *Sentiments*. I will not make *Aurora* rise with a Smile, to see the sad Passions which *Dido* had abandon'd her self to, when the first break of Day presents her with the Flight of *Aeneas*. This concerns the Doctrine of the *Thoughts* as much as that of the *Expression*; and oft times the *Turn* and the *Expression* make all the Beauty of a Thought. A Fable, an Allusion, a point of Doctrine, a *Metaphor*, or some other Figure shall be wholly contain'd in one Word. That which we are now speaking of is more particularly design'd for the *Expression*.

Poets are oblig'd to keep up to the Rules of Art: But they are not to discover them openly. Oftentimes these very Reflections prejudice, and hinder the Pleasure and the Passion. In this case they have recourse to some Expression and Phrase, which being of it self indifferent to the matter that is treated on, and not obliging the Reader to any Reflection that lessens his Attention to the main thing, does yet give those an occasion of finding out the Rules and the Artifice, who have a mind to look after them. Here is one instance of this taken from the supposition of those that suppose that *Aeneas* did not spend the Winter in *Africk*. The Poet represents the haste which the *Trojans* made to equip their Ships for a sudden Voyage into *Italy*, and he expresses it thus:

*Frondescque ferunt remos, & robora Sylvis
Infabricata fuga studio.*

Virgil's meaning will seem sufficiently explain'd, if one should say, That the Trojans prepar'd for their Departure with so much earnestness and precipitation, that they brought the Trees almost just as they found them, without giving themselves the leisure to square them, to take the Bark, or so much as to strip the Branches off them. And yet the Word *Frondentes* is not mention'd, which denotes expressly that these Trees had their Leaves on: From whence one may conclude, that this time was not the Winter Season; and that this other Expression, *Hyberno Sidere*, which *Virgil* makes use of upon the same occasion, cannot denote that Season, but only signifies the Tempestuous Constellation of *Orion*, which is predominant in the Summer.

The two Remarks I have made in this Chapter, are so much the more necessary, because that those who never invent any thing of their own, but make it their only business to translate, do never sufficiently reflect thereon. One of the best Translators of the *Aeneid* into French, has in one single Verse given us an Example of these two things. 'Tis in that of the fifth Book.

Septima post Trojæ excidium, jam vertitur Æstas.

This signifies that 'twas the end of the seventh Summer since the Ruine of Troy. By this the Poet gives us to understand, that *Aeneas* did not spend the Winter in Carthage, since he came thither about the Solstice of the seventh Summer; and at the end of the same Summer he is upon his return to Sicily. This likewise makes it appear that *Anchises*, whose Anniversary they then celebrated, dyed at the end of the Summer. Lastly, This serves to give an account what the Time and the Duration of the *Epick Action* in the *Aeneid* is. All these proofs then are enervated, and the quite contrary are brought in in their stead by this Translation:

Le Septième Printemps peint la terre de fleurs.

The Seventh Spring now paints the Earth with Flowers.

Beside this pleasant Expression, and these Terms of *Spring*, *Flowers*, and *painted Earth*, are entirely opposite to the design of him that speaks, and to the occasion upon which it is spoken. The Trojan Matrons did not lament the Death of *Anchises*, whose Anniversary they then kept, so much as they did the Miseries they had already suffer'd on the Sea, and those they were still to suffer. They had not their Thoughts then upon the Flowers of the Spring, nor upon the Beauties of the Earth, but upon the sad and frightful Scenes the Sea presented to them; which they look'd upon with Tears in their Eyes, and with Sighs and Complaints in their Mouths;

With

* With weeping Eyes the Deep they all survey'd;
 And fetching hideous Sighs, Alas! they said,
 Must we poor wearied Souls endure again
 The rage and fury of the Savage Main?

* Cunctaque profundum
 Pontum aspectabant flentes:
 Heu! tot vada fessis,
 & tantum superesse maris. Æn. 5.

CHAP. VIII.

How one ought to judge of Elocution.

WHatever Rules we have laid down in this Treatise, and howsoever we have expressed our thoughts, yet it has been far from our design to form a Poet, and to teach Men how to make an *Epos*: But only to give the World a clearer insight into the *Æneid*. So that we must look upon the whole only as the way whereby one should judge of that excellent piece. 'Tis upon this Consideration that we shall here add some general Reflexions to those we have already made.

The justness of the Judgment one passes upon the *Thoughts* and *Elocution* of an Author, depends on the Nature of the Poem one reads, and which one should be thoroughly qualified with, and beside that, it depends upon the Qualities of the mind of him that reads it.

† *Horace* touches upon the first point in the comparison he makes between *Poetry* and *Painting*. *Pictures* have their *Shadows*, their *Distances*, and their *Point of Sight*, without which they lose all their Grace and Regularity. The Images that

adorn the Arch of a very high *Cupola*, are very large where they are, and to those who view them pretty near, represent only Members that are monstrous in their Projections. A Man would render himself ridiculous, if he seriously found fault with those misshapen Postures, which Men of Understanding greatly admire. Because in truth these irregular Figures are harder to draw well, than all the ordinary Decorations, where every thing is just and regular.

† Ut *Pictura Poësis* erit,
 quæ si propius sit, Te capiet
 magis, & quedam si longius abster.
 Hæc amat obscurum: videri hæc sub
 luce videri. Hor. Poet.

'Tis just so with the Works of the Poets. It is easie after the same manner to find fault with the most excellent and admirable touches of them. One shall inveigh against *Homer* for carrying on the Bravery of *Achilles* even to Brutality; and for degrading the Patience of *Ulysses*, even to the making him a Beggar. He will laugh at the Meekness and Piety of *Aeneas*; and prefer the Valour of *Turnus* before him. And yet that which appears defective in these Poetical Hero's, is just in the same manner as certain. Pictures seem irregular, when one takes them out of their proper place, and considers them alone, without their Circumstances. These pretended Faults have more justness and Artifice in them, and are a great deal harder to manage, than the pitiful Beauties, and the cold and languishing Perfections, which the meanest Poets may steal from *Moralists*, and give to their chief Personages.

Poetry then has its *Shadow*, and its *Point of Sight* as well as *Painting*. And to discover the Beauty and Artifice of each passage, a Man must not examine it alone and without its Circumstances; for then he will be liable to mistakes. He should read it with the same Passions with which it was penn'd. And he must entertain these motions in the whole Series of the subject matter, and of the Body of the Poem. To do otherwise, is to deceive ones self, or upon design to deceive others. 'Tis to do as *Eschynes*, when he upbraids *Demosthenes*, and says, the Phrases he made use of were more like *Monsters* than Words in a Speech. That they might appear such, he proposes them out of their due place, and without that Patheticalness with which they were spoken and heard. *Cicero* says this is no such hard matter. Nor is there any difficulty to find fault with several Beauties of *Homer* and *Virgil*, and to turn them into Ridicule, either by being ignorant of the Art, or by the Wit of an Enemy, or by the Spite of an envious Humour, or lastly by the Buffooneries of a Railer.

We may likewise fall into these false *Criticisms* for want of Learning, and a deep reach. We would fain have *Homer* and *Virgil* form the Customs and Manners of their Personages according to the modern Mode. We think their ways of speaking fantastical, because they would be ridiculous, if turn'd *Verbatim* into our Language. We fancy there's an extraordinary meanness in the Words *Pots* and *Kettles*, *Blood*, *Fat*, the *Intestines* and other parts of Animals, because all this is now nothing else but *Butcher's* and *Kitchen-girls* Language, and we are apt to laugh at it. And we never consider that in *Homer* and *Virgil's* time all this was agreeable to the sense of the

* *Moab is my Washpot.*

Psal. 60. v. 8.

* *Holy Ghost* himself, which could never be in the wrong, that God had very carefully

Now the Sons of Eli were Sons of Belial, they knew not the Lord. And the Priests Custom with the People was, &c. 1 Sam. 2. from v. 12. to v. 17.

Co. 3. 1.

vn'd

enjoy'd *Moses* all these things, as the most August and Venerable that he would have us'd in the Religion and Worship he requir'd of Men; and that lastly, Queens, and Princesses, and Persons of the finest Make, observ'd them with care, respect, and veneration. 'Tis therefore according to these Ideas that our Poets were bound to speak of these things. They would have been impious had they treated these Subjects with Contempt. And perhaps a *Christian* would do little better, should he dare to ridicule them, especially if we reflect that the Books of *Homer* and *Virgil* have us'd them less than they are made use of in several Books of the *Holy Bible*, which a Man by thus doing will expose to the Buffoonery of *Libertines* and *Atheists*.

The *Expression* in its kind is of no less extent, and requires no less study. The *Greek* and *Latin* are two dead Languages, of which we are no longer Masters. They have their Turns, their Delicacies, and their Beauties, which we ought to study in the best *Originals*. It would be a piece of Vanity, if we pretended to understand the Languages which we no longer speak, as well as those who have improv'd them for so many Ages together, and as well as those that have brought them to their highest perfection, and have come off with the greatest success. Shall a *French* Man, or any Man now a days pretend that he is better qualified to Criticise upon *Homer* than *Aristotle* was? If not, then we should credit him *, when he assures us, that this Poet has surpass'd all others in the Art of Writing well, whether we consider his *Sentiments* and *Thoughts*, or whether we consider his *Expression*: And that he has not only excell'd all others, but met with perfect success.

* Δίξει ὃ διανοία ὑπερβαίνει. Τὰς διανοίας ὃ τὴν λήξιν ἔχει καλῶς διεῖπται ὃ πρῶτον ὀμιλεῖται ὃ πρῶτον ὃ λέγεται.
Poet. c. 24.

We may therefore shut up all by ending as we began. Languages as well as Poems are the Inventions of Art and a Genius, which gives them their Form and Perfection. If we have a mind to know them thoroughly, and to pass a right Judgment upon the *Ancients*, we must before every thing rectifie our Judgment. If a Man has a mind to know whether a Line be strait or no, he does not take the next piece of Wood he can find to clap to it, but this piece of Wood must in the first place be made perfectly strait, if he would have it serve for a Rule: Else, if he applys it, and it does not touch all the parts of the Line, he will not guess whether the fault be in the Line or in the piece of Wood. Just so likewise, before we judge of a Poem, we should rectifie our Judgment, and prove it by the excellent Works of the best Masters. If they do not please us, we should rather think the fault is in our own Judgments, than in those Models; and if they do please us, we may rely upon our selves with the greater assurance,

assurance, according to that judicious Thought of *Quintilian* :
" That he whom *Cicero* pleases, should by that conclude, that he
" has benefited himself very much.

The same thing we say of our four Authors. A Person may rely upon his own Judgment in that which concerns the *Epick Poem*, and may assure himself of its Rectitude and Straightness, when his Thoughts, his Genius, and his Reasonings are conformable to the *Precepts* of *Aristotle* and *Horace*, and to the *Practice* of *Homer* and *Virgil*.

The E N D.

A N



AN
ESSAY
UPON
SATYR,

Written by the Famous
Monsieur DACIER.

HORACE having Entitled his Books of Satyr *Sermones* and *Satyra* indifferently, and these two Titles giving different *Idea's*; I think it very necessary to explain what the *Latins* understood by the Word *Satyr*. The Learned *Casaubon* is the first, and indeed the only Man, that has with Success attempted to shew what the *Satyrical Poessie* of the *Greeks*, and the *Satyr* of the *Romans*, was. His Book is an inestimable Treasure; and it must be confessed, I have had considerable Helps from it; which is the Use we ought to make of the Works of such extraordinary Men, who have gone before us only to be our Guides, and serve us as Torches in the Darkness of Antiquity. Nevertheless, you must not so continually fix your Eyes upon them, as not to consider whither you are led: for they divert sometimes into Paths, where you cannot with Safety follow them. This Method is what my self have observed in forsaking my Directors, and have ventured that way which no body before me has gone; of which the following Discourse will convince you.

Satyr

Satyr is a kind of Poetry only known amongst the *Romans*, having no Relation to the *Satyrical* Poësie of the *Greeks*, though some Learned Men have pretended to the contrary. *Quintilian* leaves no room to doubt upon this Point, when he writes in Chap. 10. *Satyra quidem tota nostra est*. The same Reason makes *Horace* call it, in the last *Satyr* of Book 1. *Græcis intactum Carmen*. The natural and true Etymology is this: The *Latins* called it *SATUR*, *quasi plenum*, to which there was nothing wanting for its Perfection. Thus *Satur color*, when the Wool has taken a good Dye, and nothing can be added to the Perfection of it. From *Satur* they have made *Satura*, which they wrote sometimes with an *i*, *Satira*: They used in other Words, the same Variation of the Letter *u* into *i*, as in *Maxumus*, *Maximus*; *optumus*, *optimus*. *Satura* is an *Adjective*, which has reference to a Substantive understood; for the ancient *Romans* said *Saturam*, understanding *Lancem*: And *Satura Lanx* was properly a Bason fill'd with all sorts of Fruit, which they offer'd every Year to *Ceres* and *Bacchus*, as the first fruits of all they had gathered. These Offerings of different Things mix'd together, were not unknown to the *Greeks*, who call'd 'em *παραπλήνιον*, a Sacrifice of all sorts of Fruit, *παραπλήνιον* and *παραπλήνιον*, an Offering of all sorts of Grain, when they offer'd Pot-herbs. The Grammarian *Diomedes* has perfectly describ'd both the Custom of the *Romans*, and the Word *Satura*, in this Passage, *Lanx referta variis multisque primitiis, sacris Ceresis inferebatur, & à copia & Saturitate rei, Satura vocabatur: cujus generis lancium & Virgilius in Georgicis meminit, cum hoc modo dicit,*

Lancibus & pandis fumantia reddimus exta.

And — *lancesque & liba feremus.*

From thence the Word *Satura* was apply'd to many other Mixtures, as in *Festus*: *Satira cibi genus, ex variis rebus conditum*. From hence it pass'd to the Works of the Mind; for they call'd some Laws *Leges Saturas*, which contain'd many Heads or Titles; as the *Julian*, *Papian*, and *Popean* Laws, which were called *Miscellas*, which is of the same Signification with *Satura*. From hence arose this Phrase, *Per Saturam legem ferre*, when the Senate made a Law, without gathering, and counting the Votes, in haste, and confusedly all together, which was properly call'd, *Per Saturam sententias exquirere*, as *Salust* has it after *Lelius*. But they rested not here, but gave this Name to certain Books, as *Pescennius Festus*, whose Histories were call'd *Saturas*, or *per Saturam*. From all these Examples, 'tis not hard to suppose, that these Works of *Horace* took from hence their Name, and that they were call'd, *Saturæ quia multis & variis rebus hoc*
carmen

carmen refertum est, because these Poems are full of a great many different Things, as Porphyrius says, which is partly true. But it must not be thought it is immediately from thence; for this Name had been used before for other Things, which bore a nearer Resemblance to the Satyrs of Horace; in Explanation of which, a Method is to be follow'd, which Casaubon himself never thought of, and which will put Things in so clear a Light, that there can be no place left for Doubt.

The Romans having been almost four hundred Years without any Scenical Plays, Chance and Debauchery made them find in one of their Feasts, the Saturnian and Fescennine Verses, which for six score Years they had instead of Dramatick Pieces. But these Verses were rude, and almost without any Numbers, as being made *Extempore*, and by a People as yet but barbarous, who had little other skill, than what flow'd from their Joy, and the Fumes of Wine. They were filled with the grossest sort of Raileries, and attended with Gestures and Dances. To have a livelier Idea of this, you need but reflect upon the honest Peasants, whose clownish Dances are attended with *Extempore* Verses; in which, in a wretched manner, they jeer one another with all they know. To this Horace refers in the first Epistle of his Second Book;

*Fescennina per hunc inventa licentia morem,
Versibus alternis opprobria rustica fudit.*

This Licentious and Irregular Verse, was succeeded by a sort more correct, filled with a pleasant Raillery, without the Mixture of any thing scurrillous; and these obtain'd the Name of Satyrs, by reason of their Variety, and had regulated Forms, that is, regular Dances and Musick; but indecent Postures were banish'd. Titus Livius has it in his Seventh Book. *Vernaculis artificibus, quia Hister Tusco verbo Ludio vocabatur, nomen Histrionibus inditum, qui non sicut ante Fescennino versu similem compositum temere, ac rudem alternis jaciebant; sed impletas modis Satyras, descripto jam ad Tibicinem cantu, motuque congruenti peragebant.* These Satyrs were properly honest Farces, in which the Spectators and Actors were rallied without Distinction.

Livius Andronicus found things in this Posture when he first undertook to make Comedies and Tragedies in Imitation of the Grecians. This Diversion appearing more noble and perfect, they run to it in Multitudes, neglecting the Satyrs for some time, tho they receiv'd them a little after; and some modell'd them into a purpos'd Form, to Act at the End of their Comedies, as the French Act their Farces now. And then they alter'd their Name of Satyrs for that of *Exodia*, which they preserve to this day. This was the first and most ancient kind of Roman Satyr. There are

two other sorts, which though very different from this first, yet both owe their Birth to this, and are, as it were, Branches of it. This I shall prove the most succinctly I can.

A Year after *Livius Andronicus* had caus'd his first Efforts to be Acted, *Italy* gave Birth to *Ennius*; who being grown up, and having all the Leisure in the World to observe the eager Satisfaction with which the *Romans* receiv'd the Satyrs, of which I have already spoke, was of Opinion, that Poems, tho not adapted to the Theatre, yet preserving the *Gaul*, the *Railings*, and Pleasantry which made these Satyrs take with so much Applause, would not fail of being well receiv'd: he therefore ventur'd at it, and compos'd several Discourses, to which he retain'd the Name of *Satyrs*. These Discourses were entirely like those of *Horace*, both for the Matter and the Variety. The only essential Difference that is observable, is, that *Ennius*, in Imitation of some *Greeks*, and of *Homer* himself, took the Liberty of mixing several kinds of Verses together, as, *Hexameters*, *Iambics*, *Trimeters*, with *Tetrimeters*, *Trochaics* or *Square Verse*; as it appears from the Fragments which are left us. These following Verses are of the *Square* kind, which *Aulus Gellius* has preserv'd us, and which very well merit a Place here for the Beauty they contain:

*Hoc erit tibi Argumentum semper in promptu situm,
Ne quid expectes Amicos, quod tute agere possies.*

I attribute also to these Satyrs of *Ennius* these other kinds of Verses, which are of a Beauty and Elegance much above the Age in which they were made; nor will the sight of 'em here be unpleasant.

*Non habeo denique nauci Marsum Augurem,
Non vicanos aruspices, non de Cicro Astrologos,
Non Iliacos Conectores, non Interpretes Hominum:
Non enim sunt ii aut Scientia, aut Arte Divini;
Sed Superstitiosi vates, Impudentesque harioli,
Aut inertes, aut insani, aut quibus egestas imperat:
Qui sui questus causa fidas suscitant sententias,
Qui sibi semitam non sapiunt, alteri monstrant viam,
Quibus divitias pollicentur, ab iis Drachmam petunt,
De divitiis deducant Drachmam, reddant cetera.*

Horace has borrow'd several Things from these Satyrs. After *Ennius*, came *Pacuvius*; who also writ Satyrs in Imitation of his Uncle *Ennius*.

Lucilius was born in the time when *Pacuvius* was in most Reputation. He also wrote Satyrs. But he gave 'em a new Turn, and

and endeavoured to imitate, as near as he could, the Character of the old Greek Comedy, of which we had but a very imperfect Idea in the ancient Roman Satyr, and such, as one might find in a Poem, which Nature alone had dictated before the Romans had thought of imitating the Grecians, and enriching themselves with their Spoils. 'Tis thus you must understand this Passage of the first Satyr of the second Book of Horace.

— *Quid, cum est Lucilius ausis,
Primus in hunc operis componere carmina morem?*

Horace never intended by this to say, That there were no Satyrs before Lucilius, because Ennius and Pacuvius were before him, whose Example he followed: He only would have it understood, That Lucilius having given a new Turn to this Poem, and embellish'd it, ought by way of Excellence to be esteemed the first Author. Quintilian had the same Thought, when he writ, in the first Chapter of the Tenth Book, *Satyra quidem tota nostra est, in qua primus insignem laudem adeptus est Lucilius.* You must not therefore be of the Opinion of Casaubon, who building on the Judgment of Diomedes, thought that the Satyr of Ennius, and that of Lucilius, were entirely different: These are the very Words of this Grammarian, which have deceived this Judicious Critick: *Satyra est Carmen apud Romanos, non quidem apud Græcos maledictum, ad carpenda hominum vitia, Archææ Comædiæ charactere compositum, quale scripserunt Lucilius & Horatius, & Persius. Sed olim Carmen quod ex variis Poematibus constabat, Satyra dicebatur, quale scripserunt Pacuvius & Ennius.* You may see plainly, that Diomedes distinguishes the Satyr of Lucilius from that of Ennius and Pacuvius; the Reason which he gives for this Distinction, is ridiculous, and absolutely false. The good Man had not examin'd the Nature and Origin of these two Satyrs, which were entirely like one another, both in Matter and Form; for Lucilius added to it only a little Politeness, and more Salt, almost without changing any thing: And if he did not put together several sorts of Verse in the same piece, as Ennius has done, yet he made several Pieces, of which some were entirely Hexameters, others entirely Iambics, and others Trochaics, as is evident from his Fragments. In short, if the Satyrs of Lucilius differ from these of Ennius, because the former has added much to the Endeavours of the latter, as Casaubon has pretended, it will follow from thence, that those of Horace, and those of Lucilius, are also entirely different; for Horace has no less refin'd on the Satyrs of Lucilius, than he on those of Ennius and Pacuvius. This Passage of Diomedes has also deceiv'd Douss the Son. I say not this to expose some light Faults of these great Men,

Men, but only to shew, with what Exactness, and with what Caution, their Works must be read, when they treat of any thing so obscure and so ancient.

I have made appear what was the ancient Satyr, that was made for the Theatre: I have shewn, that that gave the Idea of the Satyr of Ennius: and, in fine, I have sufficiently prov'd, that the Satyrs of Ennius and Pacuvius, of Lucilius and Horace, are but one kind of Poem. which has received its Perfection from the last. 'Tis time now to speak of the second kind of Satyr, which I promised to explain, and which is also derived from the ancient Satyr: 'Tis that which we call Varronian, or the Satyr of Menippus the Cinick Philosopher.

This Satyr was not only compos'd of several sorts of Verse, but Varro added Prose to it, and made a Mixture of Greek and Latin. Quintilian, after he had spoke of the Satyr of Lucilius, adds, *Alterum illud est, & prius Satyræ genus, quod non sola Carminum varietate mistum condidit Terentius Varro, vir Romanorum eruditissimus.* The only Difficulty of this Passage is, that Quintilian assures us, that this Satyr of Varro was the first; for how could that be, since Varro was a great while after Lucilius? Quintilian meant not that the Satyr of Varro was the first in order of Time; for he knew well enough, that in that respect he was the last: But he would give us to understand, that this kind of Satyr, so mix'd, was more like the Satyr of Ennius and Pacuvius, who gave themselves a greater Liberty in this Composition than Lucilius, who was more severe and correct.

We have now only some Fragments left of the Satyr of Varro; and those generally very imperfect; the Titles, which are most commonly double, shew the great Variety of Subjects, of which Varro treated.

Seneca's Book on the Death of Claudius, Boetius his *Consolation of Philosophy*, and that of Petronius Arbiter, are Satyrs entirely like those of Varro.

This is what I have in general to say on Satyr; nor is it necessary I insist any more on this Subject. This the Reader may observe, that the Name of Satyr in Latin, is not less proper for Discourses that recommend Virtue, than to those which are design'd against Vice. It had nothing so formidable in it as it has now, when a bare Mention of Satyr makes them tremble, who would fain seem what they are not; for Satyr, with us, signifies the same Thing, as exposing or lashing of some Thing or Person: yet this different Acceptation alters not the Word, which is always the same; but the Latins, in the Titles of their Books, have often had regard only to the Word, in the Extent of its Signification, founded on its Etymology, whereas we have had respect only to the first and general Use, which has been made of it in the beginning, to
mock

mock and deride; yet this Word ought always to be writ in *Latin* with an (u) or (i) *Satura*, or *Satira*, and in English by an (i). Those who have wrote it with a (y) thought with *Scaliger*, *Heinsius*, and a great many others, that the Divinities of the Groves, which the *Grecians* call'd *Satyrs*, the *Romans* *Fauns*, gave their Names to these Pieces; and that of the Word *Satyrus* they had made *Satyra*, and that these *Satyrs* had a great Affinity with the *Satyrick* Pieces of the *Greeks*, which is absolutely false, as *Casaubon* has very well prov'd it, in making it appear, That of the Word *Satyrus* they could never make *Satyra*, but *Satyrica*: And in shewing the Difference betwixt the *Satyrick* Poems of the *Greeks*, and the *Roman* *Satyrs*. Mr. *Spanheim*, in his fine Preface to the *Cæsars*, of the Emperour *Julian*, has added new Reflections to those which this Judicious Critick had advanced; and he has establish'd, with a great deal of Judgment, five or six essential Differences between those two Poems, which you may find in his Book. The *Greeks* had never any thing that came near this *Roman* *Satyr*, but their *Silli* [σίλλιοι] which were also biting Poems, as they may easily be perceived to be yet, by some Fragments of the *Silli* of *Timon*. There was however this Difference, That the *Silli* of the *Greeks* were *Parodious* from one End to the other, which cannot be said of the *Roman* *Satyrs*; where, if sometimes you find some *Parodia's*, you may plainly see that the Poet did not design to affect it, and by consequence the *Parodia's* do not make the Essence of a *Satyr*, as they do the Essence of the *Silli*.

Having explain'd the Nature, Origin, and Progress of *Satyr*, I'll now say a Word or two of *Horace* in particular.

There cannot be a more just Idea given of this part of his Works, than in comparing them to the Statues of the *Silens*, to which *Alcibiades* in the Banquet compares *Socrates*. They were Figures, that without had nothing agreeable or beautiful, but when you took the pains to open them, you found the Figures of all the Gods. In the manner that *Horace* presents himself to us in his *Satyrs*, we discover nothing of him at first that deserves our Attachment. He seems to be fitter to amuse Children, than to employ the Thoughts of Men; but when we remove that which hides him from our Eyes, and view him even to the Bottom, we find in him all the Gods together; that is to say, all those Virtues which ought to be the continual Practice of such as seriously endeavour to forsake their Vices.

Hitherto we have been content to see only his out-side; and 'tis a strange thing, that *Satyrs*, which have been read so long, have been so little understood, or explain'd: They have made a Halt at the out-side, and were wholly busied in giving the Interpretation of Words. They have commented upon him like Grammarians,

not Philosophers; as if *Horace* had writ merely to have his Language understood, and rather to divert, than instruct us. That is not the End of this Work of his. The End of any Discourse is, the Action for which that Discourse is compos'd; when it produces no Action, 'tis only a vain Amusement, which idly tickles the Ear, without ever reaching the Heart.

In these two Books of his Satyrs, *Horace* would teach us, to conquer our Vices, to rule our Passions, to follow Nature, to limit our Desires, to distinguish True from False, and Ideas from Things, to forsake Prejudice, to know thoroughly the Principles and Motives of all our Actions, and to shun that Folly which is in all Men who are bigotted to the Opinions they have imbibed under their Teachers, which they keep obstinately, without examining whether they are well groundd. In a Word, He endeavours to make us happy for our selves, agreeable, and faithful to our Friends, easie, discreet, and honest to all, with whom we are oblig'd to live. To make us understand the Terms he uses, to explain the Figures he employs, and to conduct the Reader safely through the Labyrinth of a difficult Expression, or obscure Parenthesis, is no great Matter to perform: And as *Epictetus* says, There is nothing in That beautiful, or truly worthy a wise Man. The principal and most important Business, is, to shew the Rise, the Reason, and the Proof of his Precepts, to demonstrate that those who do not endeavour to correct themselves by so beautiful a Model, are just like sick Men, who having a Book full of Receipts, proper to their Distempers, content themselves to read 'em, without comprehending them, or so much as knowing the Advantage of them.

I urge not this because I have my self omitted any thing in these Annotations, which was the incumbent Duty of a Grammarian to observe; this I hope the World will be sensible of, and that there remains no more Difficulty in the Text. But that which has been my chief Care, is, to give an Insight into the very Matter that *Horace* treats of, to shew the Solidity of his Reasons, to discover the Turns he makes use of to prove what he aims at, and to refute or elude that which is opposd to him, to confirm the Truth of his Decisions, to make the Delicacy of his Sentiments perceiv'd, to expose to open Day the Folly he finds in what he condemns. This is what none have done before me. On the contrary, as *Horace* is a true *Proteus*, that takes a thousand different Forms, they have often lost him, and not knowing where to find him, have grappled him as well as they could; they have palm'd upon him in several places, not only Opinions which he had not, but even those which he directly refutes: I don't say this to blame those who have taken Pains before me on the Works of this great Poet; I commend their Endeavours; they have open'd me the way;
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and if it be granted, that I have some little Advantage over them, I owe it wholly to the great Men of Antiquity, whom I have read with more Care, and without doubt with more Leisure. I speak of *Homer*, of *Plato*, and *Aristotle*, and of some other Greek and Latin Authors, which I study continually, that I may turn my Taste on theirs, and draw out of their Writings, the Justices of Wit, good Sense and Reason.

I know very well, That there are now a-days some Authors, who laugh at these great Names, who disallow the Acclamations which they have receiv'd from all Ages, and who would deprive them of the Crowns which they have so well deserv'd, and which they have got before such August Tribunals. But for fear of falling into *Admiration*, which they look upon as the Child of Ignorance, they do not perceive that they go from that *Admiration*, which *Plato* calls the Mother of *Wisdom*, and which was the first that opened Mens Eyes. I do not wonder that the Celestial Beauties, which we find in the Writing of these incomparable Men, lose with them all their Attractives and Charms, because they have not the Strength to keep their Eyes long enough upon them. Besides, it is much easier to despise than understand them. As for my self, I declare, that I am full of Admiration and Veneration for their Divine Geniuses: I have them always before my Eyes, as venerable and incorruptible Judges; before whom I take pleasure to fanstie, that I ought to give an Account of my Writings. At the same time I have a great Respect for Posterity, and I always think with more Fear than Confidence, on the Judgment that will pass on my Works, if they are happy enough to reach it. All this does not hinder me from esteeming the great Men that live now. I acknowledge, that there are a great many who are an Honour to our Age, and who would have adorn'd the Ages past. But amongst these great Men I speak of, I do not know one, and there cannot be one, who does not esteem and honour the Ancients who is not of their taste, and who follows not their Rules. If you go never so little from them, you go at the same time from Nature and Truth; and I shall not be afraid to affirm, that it wou'd not be more difficult to see without Eyes, or Light, than 'tis impossible to acquire a solid Merit, and to form the Understanding by other means, than by those that the *Greeks* and *Romans* have traced for us: whether it be that we follow them by the only force of Natural Happiness, or Instinct, or that Art and Study have conducted us thither. As for those who thus blame Antiquity, without knowing of it, once for all I'll undeceive them, and make it appear, that in giving all the Advantage to our Age, they take the direct Course to dishonour it; for what greater Proofs can be of the Rudeness, or rather Barbarity of an Age, than in it to hear *Homer* called dull and heavy, *Plato* tiresome

tiresome and tedious, *Aristotle* ignorant, *Demosthenes* and *Cicero* vulgar Orators, *Virgil* a Poet without either Grace or Beauty, and *Horace* an Author unpolished, languid, and without force? The *Barbarians* who ravag'd *Greece*, and *Italy*, and who labour'd with so much Fury to destroy all things that were fine and noble, have never done any thing so horrible as this. But I hope that the false Taste of some particular Men without Authority, will not be imputed to the whole Age, nor give the least Blemish to the Ancients. 'Twas to no purpose that a certain Emperour declar'd himself an Enemy to *Homer*, *Virgil*, and *Titus Livius*. All his Efforts were ineffectual, and the Opposition he made to Works so perfect, serv'd only to augment in his History the number of his Follies, and render him more odious to all Posterity.

O F

OF PASTORALS.

De Boissac
By Monsieur De FONTENELLE,

Englified by Mr. MOTTEUX.

OF all kinds of Poetry the Pastoral is probably the most Ancient, as the keeping of Flocks was one of the first Employments which Men took up. 'Tis very likely that these primitive Shepherds, amidst the Tranquility and Leisure which they enjoy'd, bethought themselves of singing their Pleasures and their Loves; and then their Flocks, the Woods, the Springs, and all those Objects that were most familiar to them naturally came into the Subject of their Songs. They liv'd in great plenty after their way, without any controul by Superiour Power, being in a manner the Kings of their own Flocks; and I do not doubt but that a certain Joy and Openness of Heart that generally attends Plenty and Liberty induc'd them to sing, and to make Verses.

Society in time was brought to perfection, or rather declin'd and was perverted; and Men took up Employments that seem'd to them of greater consequence; more weighty affairs fill'd their Minds, Towns and Cities were built every where, and mighty States at last were founded and establish'd. Then those who liv'd in the Country became Slaves to those who dwelt in Cities, and the Pastoral Life being grown the Lot of the most wretched sort of People, no longer inspir'd any delightful Thought.

To please others in ingenious Composures, Men ought to be in a condition to free themselves from pressing want; and their Minds ought to be refin'd through a long use of Civil Society: Now a Pastoral Life has always wanted one of these two Circumstances: The primitive Shepherds, of whom we have spoken, liv'd indeed in plenty enough, but in their Times the World had not yet had leisure to grow polite. The following Ages might have produc'd something more refin'd, but the Shepherds of those Days were too poor and dejected: So that the Country-way of living, and the Poetry of Shepherds must needs have been always very homely and artless.

And indeed nothing is more certain, than that no real Shepherds can be altogether like those of *Theocritus*. Can any one think that 'tis natural for Shepherds to say like his?

* *Gods! When she view'd, how strong was the Surprise!
Her Soul took Fire, and sparkled through her Eyes!
How did her Passions, how her Fury move!
How soon she plung'd into th' Abyss of Love!*

[* These Lines, and some in the following Pages, are taken out of English Versions.]

Let the following Passages be examin'd:

*O that, to Crown what e're my Wish can crave,
I were that Bee which flies into your Cave!
There softly through your Garland wou'd I creep,
And steal a Kiss when you are fast asleep!*

*I know what Love is now, a cruel God,
A Tygress bore, and nurs'd him in a Wood,
A cruel God, he shoots through ev'ry Vein——*

*The Fair Calistris, as my Goats I drove,
Wish Apples pales me, and still murmurs Love.*

*The Pastures flourish, and the Flocks improve,
All smiles, so soon as here resorts my Love;
But Oh! when e're the dear one leaves the place,
At once there fades the Shepherds and the Grass.*

*Ye Gods, I wish not heaps of Gold refin'd,
Nor rapid swiftness to outstrip the Wind;
But let me sit and sing by yonder Rock,
Clasp thee, my Dear, and view my feeding Flock.*

I am of opinion that there will be found in these Expressions more Beauty and more Delicacy of Imagination than real Shepherds have.

But I don't know how *Theocritus* having sometimes rais'd his Shepherds in so pleasing a manner above their native Genius, could let them so very often fall to it again; I wonder he did not perceive 'twas fit that a certain gross Clownishness, which is always very unbecoming, should be omitted. When *Daphnis* in the first *Idyllium* is ready to die for Love, and a great number of Deities are come to visit him, in the midst of that honourable Company, he is reprovd for being like the Goat-herds, who envy the pleasure of their Copulating Goats, and are jealous of them; and 'tis most certain that the Terms

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us'd by *Theocritus* to represent this, are much of the kind of the Idea which they give.

*Ab Daphnis, loose and wanton in thy Love !
A Herdsman thought, thou dost a Goat-herd prove :
A Goat-herd, when he sees the Kids at Rut,
Sits down, and grieves that he's not born a Goat :
Thus, when you see the Virgins Dance, you grieve,
Because refus'd, and now disdain to live.*

In another *Idyllium* the Goat-herd *Comatas*, and the Herdsman *Laco* contend about some Theft, which they have committed against each other ; *Comatas* stole *Laco's* Pipe, and *Laco* had stolen the Skin which *Comatas* us'd to wear to cover himself withal, so that he had left him bare. They rail at each other, and vent their Passion in reviling and abusive Words, which might become a couple of *Gracians*, but certainly are not over civil ; and then, after a gentle *Item* which one of them gives the other of smelling rank, they both sing for a Wager ; the one having challeng'd the other to that Musical Fight, though it should rather have been to a Rubbers at Fisticuffs, considering what went before ; and what seems the more odd, is, that whereas they begun with gross Taunts and ill Language, now that they are going to sing against each other, they affect an uncommon niceness concerning the Choice of the Place where they are to sing ; each proposing one, of which he makes a florid Description. For my part, I have much a-do to believe that all this is very well set together. Their Songs are as oddly diversify'd ; for among the things that relate to their Amours, and that are pretty, *Comatas* puts *Laco* in mind of a Beating which he bestow'd upon him ; and *Laco* answers him, that he does not remember it, but that he has not forgot how *Comatas* was bound and soundly lash'd by his Master *Eumarus*. I do not fantasie that those who say that *Venus*, the Graces, and *Cupid* compos'd *Theocritus's* *Idyllia*, will pretend that they had a hand in these Passages.

There are some other Places in *Theocritus* that are not altogether so low, which yet are not very entertaining, because they barely treat of Country Matters. His fourth *Idyllium* is wholly of this kind. The Subject of it is only a certain *Egon*, who, being gone to the *Olympick* Games, has left his Herds to one *Corydon*. *Battus* tells the Trustee, that the Herds are in a pitiful condition since *Egon* left them. *Corydon* answers, that he does his best, that he drives them to the best Pastures he knows, and feeds them at a Rack of Hay. *Battus* says that *Egon's* Pipe is spoil'd and mouldy in his absence ; *Corydon* replies, that it is not so, that *Egon* when he went gave it him, and that he is a notable Piper. Then *Battus* desires *Corydon*, to pull a Thorn out of his Foot, and the other having advis'd him,

never to walk over Mountains without his Shooes, the *Idyllum* presently concludes, a thing which those who are not conversant with Antiquity, would scarce have believ'd possible.

When in a Pastoral Strife one says, *Ho! My Goats go on the Brow of yonder Hill*; and the other answers, *Go, my Sheep, feed on to the Eastward.*

Or, *I hate the brush-tail'd Fox, which comes at Night and devours our Grapes*; and the other, *I hate the Beetles that Eat the Figs.*

Or, when one says, *I have made my self a Bed with Cow's Skins near a cool Stream,*

*And there I value Summer's burning Heats,
No more than Children do their Fathers Threats,
Their Mothers kind Complaints, &c.*

And the other answers, *I live in a large shady Cave, where*

*Soft Chitterlings afford me pleasing Food,
And when the Winter comes I'm stor'd with Wood;
So that I value cold no more, not I,
Than toothless Men do Nuts when Pap is by.*

May not these Discourses be thought too Clownish, and fitter to be spoken by real Country Fellows than by such Shepherds as are introduc'd in Eclogues?

Virgil, who having had the Example of *Theocritus* before his Eyes, has had an opportunity to outdo him, hath made his Shepherds more polite and agreeable. Any one who compares his third Eclogue with that of *Laco* and *Comatas* in *Theocritus* will easily find how well he cou'd rectifie and surpass what he did imitate: Not but that he still somewhat too much resembles *Theocritus*, when he loses some time in making his Pastors say,

*Beware the Stream, drive not the Sheep too nigh,
The Bank may fail, the Ram is hardly dry.
And, Kids from the River drive, and sling your Hook,
Anon I'll wash them in the shallow Brook.
And, Boys, drive to Shades, when Milk is drain'd by heat,
In vain the Milk-Maid stroaks an empty Teat.*

All this is the less pleasing considering that it comes after some tender things which are very pretty and genteel, and which have made the Reader the more unfit to relish such things as altogether relate to the Country.

Calpurnius a Writer of Eclogues, who liv'd almost three hundred Years after *Virgil*, and whose Works however are not wholly destitute of Beauty, seems to have been sorry that *Virgil* did express but with the Words, *Novimus & qui te*, those Injurious Terms with which *Laco* and *Comatas* treat one another in *Theocritus*; tho after all, it had yet been better had *Virgil* wholly suppress'd that short hint. *Calpurnius* has judg'd this Passage worthy a larger extent and therefore wrote an Eclogue which is made up of nothing but those Invectives, with which two Shepherds ready to sing for a Prize, ply each other with a great deal of Fury, till the Shepherd who was to be their Judge, is so affrighted that he runs away and leaves 'em. A very fine Conclusion!

But no Author ever made his Shepherds so clownish as *J. Baptista Mantuanus*, a Latin Poet, who liv'd in the foregoing Age, and who has been compar'd to *Virgil*, tho he has indeed nothing common with him besides his being of *Mantua*. The Shepherd *Faustus* describing his Mistress, says, that she had a good big bloated red Face, and that, though she was almost blind of an Eye, he thought her more beautiful than *Diana*. 'Twere impossible to guess what precaution another Shepherd takes before he begins a Discourse of considerable length; and who knows but that our modern *Mantuan* valued himself mightily upon having copied Nature most faithfully in those Passages?

I therefore am of Opinion, that Pastoral Poetry cannot be very charming if it is as low and clownish as Shepherds naturally are; or if it precisely runs upon nothing but rural Matters. For, to hear one speak of Sheep and Goats, and of the care that ought to be taken of those Animals, has nothing which in it self can please us; what is pleasing is the Idea of quietness, which is inseparable from a Pastoral Life. Let a Shepherd say, *My Sheep are in good Case, I conduct them to the best Pastures, they feed on nothing but the best Grass*, and let him say this in the best Verse in the World, I am sure that your imagination will not be very much delighted with it. But let him say, *How free from anxious Cares is my Life! In what a quiet state I pass my Days! All my Desires rise no higher than that I may see my Flocks in a thriving condition, and the Pastures wholesome and pleasing; I envy no Man's Happiness, &c.* You perceive that this begins to become more agreeable: The reason of it is, that the Idea runs no longer immediately upon Country Affairs, but upon the little share of Care which Shepherds undergo, and upon the quietness and leisure which they enjoy; and what is the chiefest point, upon the cheapness of their Happiness.

For, all Men would be happy, and that too at an easie rate. A quiet Pleasure is the common object of all their Passions, and we are all controuled by a certain Laziness: Even those who are most
 stirring

stirring are not precisely such for Business sake, or because they love to be in action, but because they cannot easily satisfy themselves.

Ambition, as it is too much an Enemy to this natural Laziness, is neither a general Passion nor very Delicious. A considerable part of Mankind is not ambitious; many have begun to be such, but by the means of some undertakings and ties that have determin'd them before they seriously reflected on what they did, and that have made them unfit ever to return to calmer Inclinations; and even those who have most ambition, do often complain of the Cares which it exacts and the Pains that attend it. The reason of this is that the Native Laziness, of which we were speaking, is not wholly suppress'd, though it has been sacrificed to that presumptuous Tyrant of the Mind; it prov'd the weakest, and cou'd not over balance its Rival; yet it still subsists and continually opposes the motions of ambition. Now no Man can be happy while he is divided by two warring Inclinations.

However, I do not say that Men can relish a state of absolute Laziness and Idleness; No, they must have some motion, some agitation, but it must be such a motion and agitation as may be reconcil'd, if possible, to the kind of Laziness that possesses 'em; and this is most happily to be found in Love, provided it be taken in a certain manner. It must neither be a hot, jealous, touchy, furious, desperate Love, but tender, pure, simple, delicate, faithful, and, that it may preserve it self in this state, attended with hopes: Then the heart is taken up, but not disturb'd; we have Cares, but no uneasinesses; we are mov'd, but not torn, and this soft Motion is just such, as the love of Rest, and our Native Laziness can bear it.

Besides, 'tis most certain that Love is the most general and the most agreeable of all the Passions. So, in the State of Life which we have now describ'd, there is a concurrence of the two strongest Passions, Laziness and Love; which thus are both satisfied at once; and, that we may be as happy as 'tis possible we should by the Passions, 'tis necessary that all those by which we are mov'd, agree together in us.

This is properly what we conceive of a Pastoral Life. For, it admits of no ambition, nor of any thing that moves the heart with too much Violence; Therefore our Laziness has cause to be contented. But this way of living by reason of its idleness and tranquillity creates Love more easily than any other, or at least indulges it more: But after all, what Love! A Love more innocent, because the Mind is not so dangerously refin'd; more assiduous, because those who feel it are not diverted by any other Passion; more full of Discretion, because they hardly have any acquaintance with Vanity; more faithful because with a Vivacity of Imagination,

less used, they have also less uneasiness, less distaste, and less fickleness; that is to say, in short, a Love purg'd of whatever the Excesses of human Fancy have sophisticated it with.

This consider'd, 'tis not to be admir'd why the Pictures which are drawn of a Pastoral Life, have always something so very smiling in them, and indulge our Fancies more than the Pompous Description of a splendid Court and of all the Magnificence that can shine there. A Court gives us no Idea but of toilsome and constrain'd Pleasures: For, as we have observ'd, the Idea is all in all: Cou'd the Scene of this quiet Life, with no other business but Love, be plac'd any where but in the Country, so that no Goats nor Sheep shou'd be brought in, I fancy it would be never the worse; for, the Goats and Sheep add nothing to its Felicity; but as the scene must lye either in the Country or in Towns, it seems more reasonable to chuse the First.

As the Pastoral Life is the most idle of all others, 'tis also the most fit to be the Ground-work of those Ingenious Representations of which we are speaking. So that no Ploughmen, Reapers, Vine-dressers or Hunts men, can by any means be so properly introduc'd in Eclogues, as Shepherds: Which confirms what I said, that what makes this kind of Poetry please, is not it's giving an Image of a Country Life, but rather the Idea which it gives of the tranquility and Innocence of that Life.

Yet there is an *Idyllium* of *Battus* and *Milo*, two Reapers in *Theocritus*, which has Beauties. *Milo* asks *Battus* why he does not Reap as fast as he used to do? He answers, that he is in Love, and then sings something that's very pretty about the Woman that he loves. But *Milo* laughs at him, and tells him he is a Fool, for being so idle as to be in Love; that this is not an Employment fit for one who Works for Food; and that, to divert himself and excite one another to Work, he should sing some Songs which he denotes to him, and which altogether relate to the Harvest. I must needs own that I do not so well like this Conclusion. For I would not be drawn from a pleasing and soft Idea to another that is low and without Charm.

Sannazarus has introduced none but Fishermen in his Eclogues; and I always perceive, when I read those Piscatory Poems, that the Idea which I have of the Fishermen's hard and toilsome way of living, shocks me. I don't know what moved him to bring in Fishermen instead of Shepherds, who were in possession of the Eclogue time out of mind, but had the Fishermen been in possession of it, it had been necessary to put the Shepherds in their place: For, singing, and above all, an Idle life becomes none but Shepherds: Besides methinks 'tis prettier and more genteel to send Flowers or Fruit to one's Mistress, than send her Oysters as *Sannazarus's* *Lycu* doth to his.

'Tis true that *Theocritus* hath an *Idyllium* of two Fishermen; but it doth not seem to me so beautiful as to have deserv'd to tempt any Man to write one of that kind. The subject of it is this; Two old Fishermen had but sparingly suppd together in a wretched little Thatcht house, by the Sea-side: One of them wakes his Bedfellow to tell him, he had just dreamt that he was catching a Golden Fish; and the other answers him, that he might starve though he had really caught such a one. Was this worth writing an Eclogue!

However, though none but Shepherds were introduc'd in Eclogues, 'tis impossible but that the Life of Shepherds which after all is yet very Clownish must lessen and debase their Wit, and hinder their being as ingenious, nice, and full of gallantry as they are commonly represented in Pastorals. The famous Lord *D'Urfé's Astrée* seems a less fabulous Romance than *Amadis de gaule*; yet I fantasie that in the main it is as incredible, as to the politeness and graces of his Shepherds, as *Amadis* can be as to all its Enchantments, all its Fairies, and the Extravagance of its adventures. How comes it then that Pastorals please in spite of the falsity of the Characters, which ought always to shock us? Could we be pleas'd with seeing some Courtiers represented as having a Clownishness which should resemble that of real Shepherds as much as the Gallantry which Shepherds have in Pastorals resembles that of Courtiers? No, doubtless; but indeed that Character of the Shepherds is not false after all, if we look upon it one way: For we do not mind the meanness of the Concerns that are their real Employment, but the little trouble which those Concerns bring. This meanness would wholly exclude Ornaments and Gallantry, but on the other hand the quiet state promotes them; and 'tis only on that tranquility that whatever pleases in a Pastoral Life is grounded.

Our Imagination is not to be pleas'd without Truth; but it is not very hard to please it; for, often 'tis satisfied with a kind of half Truth. Let it see only the half of a Thing, but let that half be shown in a lively manner, then it will hardly bethink it self that you hide from it the other half, and you may thus deceive it as long as you please, since all the while it imagines that this single moiety, with the Thoughts of which it is taken up, is the whole Thing. The Illusion, and at the same time the pleasingness of Pastorals therefore consists in exposing to the Eye only the Tranquility of a Shepherd's Life, and in dissembling or concealing its meanness, as also in showing only its Innocence and hiding its Miseries; so that I do not comprehend why *Theocritus* dwelt so much upon its Miseries and Clownishness.

If those who are resolv'd to find no faults in the Ancients, tell us that *Theocritus* had a mind to draw Nature just such as it is, I hope that according to those principles we shall have some *Idyllia* of Porters or Watermen discoursing together of their particular Concerns;
Which

Which will be every whit as good as some *Idyllia* of Shepherds speaking of nothing but their Goats or their Cows.

The Business is not purely to describe, we must describe such Objects as are delightful: When the quiet that reigns in the Country, and the simplicity and tenderness which are discover'd there in making Love, are represented to me, my Imagination, mov'd and affected with these pleasing Ideas, is fond of a Shepherd's Life; but tho' the vile and low Employments of Shepherds, were describ'd to me with all the exactness possible, I shou'd never be taken with 'em, and my Imagination wou'd not in the least be touch'd. The chief advantage of Poetry consists in representing to us in a lively manner the things that concern us, and in striking strongly a Heart which is pleas'd with being mov'd.

Here's enough, and perhaps too much against these Shepherds of *Theocritus*, and those who, like 'em, have too much of the Shepherd in 'em. What we have left of *Moschus* and *Bion* in the Pastoral kind, makes me extremely lament what we have lost of theirs. They have no manner of Rusticity, but rather a great deal of Delicacy and Grace, and some Ideas wholly new and pleasing. They are accus'd of being too florid; and I do not deny but that they may be said to be such in some few places; yet I don't know why the Criticks are more inclin'd to excuse *Theocritus's* Clownishness, than *Moschus* and *Bion's* Elegancy; methinks they should have done the contrary. Is it not that *Virgil* has prejudic'd every one for *Theocritus*, having done to no other the honour of imitating and copying him? Or is it not rather that the Learned have a taste that uses to nauseate what is Delicate and Genteel? What ever it is, I find that all their Favour is for *Theocritus*, and that they have resolv'd to dubb him Prince of the Bucolick Poets.

The Moderns have not often been guilty of making their Shepherds thus Clownish. The Author of *Astrea*, in that Romance, which otherwise is full of admirable things, has rather run into the other extream. Some of his Shepherds are absolutely drawn such as they ought to have been, but some others, if I am not mistaken, might better have been plac'd in *Grand Cyrus*, or in *Cleopatra*. These Shepherds often seem to me Courtiers disguis'd in a Pastoral Dress, and ill Mimicks of what they would imitate; sometimes they appear to me most Cavilling Sophisters; for tho' none but *Sylvander* has studied in the School of the *Massilians*, there are some others who happen to be as full of Subtility as himself; though I don't comprehend how they cou'd even but understand him, not having like him took their Degrees in the *Massilian* Schools.

It does not belong to Shepherds to speak of all sorts of Matters, and when a Poet has a mind to raise his Style, he may make use of other Persons. When *Virgil* desir'd to give a pompous Description of the imaginary Return of the Golden Age, which he promises to
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Gallus, *Virgil's* Contemporary, and the Honour which he receives on *Parnassus*; after which, we presently come to the Fables of *Scylla* and *Philomela*. 'Tis honest *Silvius* that gives all this fine Medley; and, as *Virgil* tells us, that according to his laudable Custom, he had taken a hearty Carouse the Day before, I am afraid, the Fumes were hardly yet got out of his Head.

Here let me once more take the freedom to own that I like better the design of an Eclogue of this kind, by *Nemesianus*, an Author who was *Calpurnius's* Contemporary, and who is not altogether to be despis'd. Some Shepherds, finding *Pas* asleep, try to play on his Pipe, but as a Mortal can make a God's Pipe yield only a very unpleasant sound, *Pas* is awak'd by it; and tells them, that if they are for Songs, he'll gratify them presently. With this he sings to them something of the History of *Bacchus*, and dwells on the first Vintage that ever was made, of which he gives a Description which seems to me very agreeable; this Design is more regular than that of *Virgil's Silvius*, and the Verses also are pretty good.

The Moderns have been often guilty of handling high Subjects in their Eclogues. The French Poet *Ronsard* has given us in his the Praises of Princes and of France, and almost all that looks like *Bucolick* in them, is his calling *Henry II. Henricus*, [or *Henry*.] *Charles IX. Carolus*, and *Queen Catherine de Medicis, Catia*, [or *Kate*.] 'Tis true, he owns that he did not follow the Rules, but it had been better to have done it, and thus have avoided the Ridicule which the disproportion that is between the Subject and the Form of the Work produces. Hence it happens that in his first Eclogue it falls to the Lot of the Shepherdess *Margot* [or *Peg*.] to sing the Elogy of *Turnebus*, *Budens*, and *Varro*, the greatest Men of their Age for *Greek* and *Hebrew*, but with whom, certainly *Peg* ought not to have been acquainted.

Because Shepherds look well in some kinds of Poetry, many Writers prostitute them to every Subject. They are often made to sing the Praises of Kings in the sublimest Style the Poet can write; and provided he has but talk'd of Oaten Pipes, Meads and Plains, Ferns or Grass, Streams or Vallies, he thinks he has written an Eclogue. When Shepherds praise a Hero, they shou'd praise him Shepherd-like, and I do not doubt but that this wou'd be very ingenious and taking, but it wou'd require some Art, and the shortest cut it seems is to make the Shepherds speak the common Dialect of praise, which is very big and lofty indeed, but very common and consequently easy enough of Conscience.

Alligorical Eclogues also are not very easy. *J. B. Monnusius*, who was a Carmelite Fryar, has one in which two Shepherds dispute, the one representing a Carmelite Fryar, who is of that Party of the Order which they call, *The strict Observance*, and the other of

the World at the Birth of *Pollio's* Son, he should not have excited the Pastoral Muses to leave their natural Strain, and raise their Voices to a pitch which they can never reach; his Business was to have left them, and have address'd himself to some others. Yet I do not know after all if it had not have been better to have kept to the Pastoral Muses; for, he might have given a pleasing Description of the good which the Return of Peace was ready to cause in the Country; and this, methinks, had been as acceptable at least as all those incomprehensible Wonders which he borrows of the *Canaan* Sibyl, this new Race of Men which is to descend from Heaven, these Grapes which are to grow on Bryars, and these Lambs whose Native Fleece is to be of a Scarlet, or Crimson hue, to save Mankind the trouble of dying the Wool. He might have flatter'd *Pollio* more agreeably with things that might have seem'd more consistent with probability, though, after all, even these perhaps did not wholly seem inconsistent with it, at least to the Party concern'd; for Praise is seldom thought such by those on whom it is lavish'd.

Shall I dare to say that *Calpurnius*, an Author much inferior to *Virgil* seems to have handled a Subject of the same nature much more to the purpose: Take notice that I only speak of the Design or Fable, and not at all of the Style. He brings in two Shepherds, who to be screen'd from the Sun's sultry heat, shelter themselves in a Cave where they find some Verses written with the God *Faunus's* own hand, which contain a Prophecy about the Happiness which the *Roman* Empire is to enjoy under the Emperour *Carus*. According to the Duty of a Pastoral Poet, he dwells sufficiently on the Prosperity and Plenty that relates to the Country, and then proceeds to higher Matters; because, as he makes a God speak, he has a Right to do so; but he brings in nothing like the Sibyl's Prophecies. 'Tis pity that *Virgil* did not write the Verses of this Piece; neither had there been need to have had them all written by him.

Virgil makes *Phabus* say to him at the beginning of his sixth Eclogue, that a Shepherd ought not to sing Kings nor Wars, but to stick to his Flocks, and such Subjects as only require a plain Style. Without doubt *Phabus's* Counsel was very good, but I cannot imagine how *Virgil* could forget it so much as to fall a singing immediately after, the original of the World, and the framing of the Universe, according to *Epicurus's* System, which was a great deal worse than to sing Kings and Wars. I must needs own that I cannot in the least tell what to make of this Piece; I do not understand what is the Design, nor what Coherence there is between the several parts of it: For after these Philosophical Notions, we have the Fables of *Hylas* and *Pasiphae*, and of *Phaeton's* Sisters which have no manner of Relation to them, and in the middle of these Fables, which are all borrow'd from very remote times, we have *Cornelius Gallus*,

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of that which they call the *Mitigated*. The famous *Bambus* is their Judge; and 'tis worth observing, that he prudently makes them lay down their Crooks, lest they fall together by the Ears.

Now, though in the main our *Mantuan* has pretty well kept the Allegory, 'tis too ridiculous to find the Controverſie between theſe two ſorts of *Carmelitans* handled Ecloguewiſe.

Yet I had rather ſee a Shepherd repreſent one of theſe, than have him act the *Epicurean*, and ſay impious things; 'tis what happens ſometimes to ſome of *Mantuanus's* Shepherds, though they are very Clowniſh, and he himſelf was of a Religious Order. *Amyntas*, one of them, in an angry fit, which makes him rail againſt the Laws and Vertue, meerly becauſe he is in Love, ſays, that Men are great Fools to feed themſelves up with a Fancy of being taken up to Heaven after their Death; and he adds, that the moſt that is like to happen then, is that they may chance to tranſmigrate into ſome Birds, and ſo flutter up and down through the Air. In vain to make this excuſable, our Fryar ſays, that *Amyntas* had liv'd a long time in Town; and as much in vain *Badius* his worthy Commentator; for as much a Modern as *Mantuanus* is, he has one, and as bigotted and hot for his Author as thoſe of the Ancients; in vain, I ſay, he takes from thence an opportunity to make this rare Reflection, that Love cauſes us to doubt of matters of Faith: 'Tis certain that theſe Errours, which ought to be deteſted by all thoſe who have heard of them, ought not to be known, much leſs mention'd by Shepherds.

To make amends, ſometimes our *Mantuan* makes his Shepherds mighty Godly. In one of his Eclogues you have a Catalogue of all the Virgin *Mary's* Holidays; in another an Apparition of the Virgin, who promiſes a Shepherd, that, when he ſhall have paſt his Life on Mount *Carmel*, ſhe'll take him to a more pleaſant place, and will make him dwell in Heaven with the *Dryades*, and *Hamadryades*, a ſort of new-faſhion'd Saints whom we did not yet know in Heaven.

Such groſs and inexcusable Indecencies may be eaſily avoided in the Character of Shepherds, but there are ſome that are not ſo obſervable, of which ſome Writers cannot ſo eaſily be freed: 'Tis the making their Shepherds ſpeak too wittily. Sometimes even thoſe of the Marquels *de Racan* are guilty of this, though they generally uſe to be very reſerv'd in that point. As for the *Italian* Authors, they are always ſo full of falſe and pointed Thoughts, that we muſt reſolve right or wrong to give them leave to indulge themſelves in that darling Stile of theirs, as natural to them as their Mother Tongue. They never take the pains to make their Shepherds ſpeak in a Paſtoral Stile, but make uſe of as bold and exaggerated Figures, and are as full of *Conceits* in that ſort of Poetry, as they are in others.

Father *Bouhours* in his excellent Treatise of the manner of thinking justly in ingenious Compositions, finds fault with *Tasso's Sylvia*, who seeing the Reflection of her Face in a Fountain, and adorning her self with Flowers, tells them she does not wear them to mend her Beauty, but to lessen them, and disgrace them by being plac'd near her brighter Charms. Our Judicious Critick thinks this Thought too full of Affectation, and not natural enough for a Shepherdess, and none can refuse their assent to this Criticism which is the result of a very delicate Taste: But when that is done, let none give themselves the Trouble of reading *Guarini's*, *Bojardelli's* and *Marini's* Pastoral Poetry with a design to find any thing in them truly Pastoral, for *Sylvia's* Thought is one of the most unaffected and single things in the World, if compar'd to most of those of which these Authors are full.

And indeed *Tasso's Aminta* is the best Thing that *Italy* has produc'd in the Pastoral kind; and has certainly very great Beauties; even the passage of *Sylvia*, except what we have observ'd in it, is one of the most ingenious and best describ'd Things I ever read, and we ought to own our selves extremely oblig'd to an *Italian* Author, for not having been more prodigal of Pointed Thoughts.

Monfieur De Segrain, whose Works are the most excellent Pattern we have of Pastoral Poetry, owns himself, that he did not always keep exactly to the Style which it requires. He says, That he has sometimes been oblig'd to humour the Genius of this Age, which delights in figures and glittering Things: But this must be said on his behalf, that he only condescended to follow this method after he had sufficiently prov'd that he can when he pleases perfectly hit the true Beauties of Pastoral. After all, none can well tell which is the Taste or Genius of this Age, 'tis not determin'd either to what is good or bad, but seems wavering sometimes on this and sometimes on that side. So I believe, that, since there is still a hazard to be run what ever side we take, 'twere better to follow the Rules and true Ideas of Things.

Between the usual Clownishness of *Theocritus's* Shepherds, and the too much Wit of most of our Modern Shepherds, a certain Medium shou'd be kept, but 'tis so far from being easily follow'd in the performance, that 'tis even difficult to denote it. The Shepherds ought to have Wit, and it ought to be fine and genteel too; for they cou'd not please without it, but they ought to have that Wit only in a certain Degree, otherwise they are no more Shepherds: I'll endeavour to determine this Degree, and adventure to give my notion of it.

The Men who have the most Wit, and those who have but an indifferent share of it, do not differ so much in the sense which they have of Things as they do in their manner of expressing it. The Passions, amidst all the Disturbance which they cause, are attended

by a kind of Light, which they impart almost equally to all those whom they possess. There is a certain Penetration, certain Ideas, which, without any regard to the difference of the Minds, are always found in Men in whatever concerns and affects them. But these Passions, at the same time that they in a manner inform the Mind of all Men alike, do not enable them to speak equally well. Those whose Mind is more refin'd, more capacious and more improv'd by Study or Conversation do, while they express their Sentiments, and something that hath the air of a Reflection, and that is not inspir'd by the Passion alone; whereas the others speak their Minds more simply, and add, in a manner, nothing that's foreign: Any ordinary Man will easily say; *I so Passionately desir'd that my Mistress might be faithful, that I believ'd her such*; but it only belongs to a refin'd Wit, as the Duke de la Rochefoucault to say, *My understanding was fool'd by my Will, or, My Reason was cully'd by my Desire*; [*L'Esprit a été en moy la Dupe du Cœur*:] The Sence is the same, the penetration equal, but the Expression is so different, that one would almost think 'tis no more the same thing.

We take no less Pleasure in finding a Sentiment express'd simply, than in a more thought-like and elaborate Manner, provided it be always equally fine: Nay the simple way of expressing it ought to please more, because it occasions a kind of a gentle surprise, and a small admiration. We are amaz'd to find something that is fine and delicate in common and unaffected Terms; and on that account the more the thing is fine, without ceasing to be Natural; and the Expression common, without being low, the deeper we ought to be struck.

Admiration and surprise are so powerful that they can even raise the value of Things beyond their Intrinsic worth. All Paris has lavish'd Exclamations of Admiration on the *Siamese* Embassadors for their Ingenious sayings; Now had some *Spanish* or *English* Embassadors spoken the same Things, no body would have minded it. This happen'd because we wrongfully suppos'd that some Men who came from the remotest Part of the World, of a tawny Complexion, dress'd otherwise than we are, and till then esteem'd Barbarians by those of *Europe*, were not to be endow'd with common Sense; and we were very much surpris'd to find they had it; So that the least thing they said fill'd us with admiration, an Admiration which after all was Injurious enough to those Gentlemen.

The same happens of our Shepherds; for, we are the more pleasantly struck with finding them thinking finely in their simple Style, because we the least expected it.

Another Thing that suits with the Pastoral Style is to run only on Actions, and never almost on Reflections. Those who have a middling share of Wit, or a Wit but little improv'd by a Converse with polite Books or Persons, use to discourse only of those particu-

lar Things of which they have had a Sense; while others raising themselves higher, reduce all things into general Ideas: The Minds of the latter have work'd and reflected upon their Sentiments and experiments, it happens that what they have seen hath led them to what they have not seen; whereas those of an inferior Order, not pursuing their Ideas beyond what they have a Sense of, it may happen that what resembles it most may still be new to them. Hence proceeds the insatiable Desire of the Multitude to see the same Objects, and their admiring always almost the same Things.

A Consequence of this Disposition of Mind is the adding to the Things that are related any Circumstances whether useful or not. This happens because the Mind has been extremely struck with the particular Action, and with all that attended it. Contrary to this a great Genius, despising all these petty Circumstances, fixes on what is most essential in Things, which commonly may be related without the Circumstances.

'Tis truer than it seems, that in such Composures when in Passion is to be describ'd, 'tis better to imitate the way of speaking used by Men of indifferent Capacity, than the Style of more refined Wits. I must own that thus there is little related besides Actions and we do not rise to Reflections; but nothing is more graceful than Actions, so display'd as to bring their Reflection along with them. Such is this admirable Touch in *Virgil*; *Galatæa* throws an Apple at me, then runs to hide her self behind the Willows, and first would be perceiv'd. The Shepherd does not tell you what is *Galatæa's* Design, though he is fully sensible of it; but the Action has made a deep pleasing Impression on his Mind, and, according as he represents it, 'tis impossible but you must guess its meaning. Now the Mind is delighted with sensible Ideas, because it easily admits of them, and it loves to penetrate, provided it be without Effort; whether it be that it loves to Act but to a certain Degree, or that a little Penetration indulges its vanity. So the Mind hath the double Pleasure, first of getting an easie Idea, then of penetrating, whenever such Cases as that of *Galatæa* are laid before it. The Action, and in a manner, the Soul of the Action all at once strike the Eyes of the Mind; it can see nothing more in the matter, nor more quickly, neither can it ever be put to less expence.

In *Virgil's* second Eclogue, *Corydon*, to commend his Pipe, tells us that *Dametas* gave it him when he died, and said to him, *Thou art the second Master it hath had, and Amyntas was jealous, because it was not bequeath'd him*: All these Circumstances are altogether Pastoral: It might not perhaps be disagreeable to bring in a Shepherd who is puzzled in the midst of his Story, and who finds some difficulty in recovering himself; but this wou'd require some Art in the management.

There are no persons whom it becomes better to lengthen a little their Narrations with Circumstances than Lovers. They might indeed be absolutely needless or too far-fetch'd; for, this would be tedious, though it may be natural enough; but those that have but a half relation to the Action which is talk'd of, and that show more passion than they, are considerable, can never fail to please. So when, in one of *Monsieur de Segrain's* Eclogues, a Shepherdess says,

*The Songs which Lysis and Menalcas sing
Pleasant to every Swain, and make the Vallies ring;
But I like better those which near This Tree,
My Jealous Shepherd lately made for me.*

The Circumstance of the Tree is pretty, only as it had been needless for any other but a Lover. According to our Idea of Shepherds, Tales and Narrations become them very well; but for them to make Speeches, such as those in *Astrea*, full of general Reflections, and Chains of Arguments, is a thing which I do not think their Character allows.

It is not amiss to make them give descriptions, provided they be not very long. That of the Cap which the Goat-herd promises to *Thyrsis*, in *Theocritus's* first *Idyllium* somewhat exceeds the Bounds: Yet, according to that Example, *Ronsard*, and *Belleau* his Contemporary, have made some that are yet longer. When their Shepherds are about describing a Basket, a Goat or a Blackbird, which they make the Prize of a Pastoral Combat, they never have done: Not that their Descriptions are sometimes without great Beauties, and are writ without admirable Art; far from this, they have too much of it for Shepherds.

Vida a Latin Poet of the last Age, and of great Reputation, in his Eclogue of *Nice*, whom I take to be *Vittoria Colonna*, the Marquess of *Pescaria's* Widow, brings in the Shepherd *Damon* giving a Description of a Rush Basket which he is to make for her. He says, that he will represent in it *Davales*, that is the Marquess, dying, and grieved that he does not die in Battle; some Kings, Captains, and Nymphs in Tears about him, *Nice* praying the Gods in vain, *Nice* fainting away at the News of *Davales's* Death, and with difficulty recovering her Senses by the means of the Water which her Women throw on her Face; and he adds, that he would have expressed many Complaints and Moans, if they could be express'd on Rush. Here are a great many Things to be show'd on a Basket! Neither do I relate them all; but I cannot tell how all this can be express'd on Rush, nor how *Damon*, who owns he cannot express on it the Complaints of *Nice*, is not at a Loss to display on it the Marquess's Grief

Grief for dying in his Bed. I shrewdly suspect that *Achilles's* Shield is the Original from which this Basket has been imitated.

I find that *Virgil* has us'd similitudes very often in his Pastoral Discourses: These similitudes are very properly brought in, to supply the place of those trivial Comparisons, and principally of those clownish proverbial sayings, which real Shepherds use almost continually: But as there is nothing more easily to be imitated than this way of using similitudes, 'tis what *Virgil* hath been most copied in. We find in all your Writers of Eclogues, nothing more common than Shepherdesses who exceed all others so much as *lofty Pines o'er top the lowly Reed, or highest Oaks the humblest Shrubs exceed*; we see nothing but the cruelty of ungrateful Shepherdesses who are to a Shepherd, *What Frosts or Storms are to the tenderest Flowers, like Hale to rip'ning Corn*, &c. I think all this old and worn thread-bare at this Time of Day, and to say the Truth on't, 'tis no great Pity. Similitudes naturally are not very proper for Passion, and Shepherds shou'd only use them when they find it difficult to express themselves otherwise; then they wou'd have a very great Beauty, but I know but very few of that kind.

Thus we have pretty near discover'd the Pitch of Wit which Shepherds ought to have, and the Style they should use. 'Tis methinks with Eclogues, as with those Dresses which are worn at *Masques or Balls*; they are of much finer stuff than those which real Shepherds usually wear; nay they are even adorn'd with Ribbands and Points, and are only made after the Country cut. In the same manner the Thoughts which are the Subject matter of Eclogues, ought to be finer and more delicate than those of real Shepherds; but they must have the most simple and most rural Dress possible.

Not but that we ought to use both simplicity and a Country-like plainness ev'n in the Thoughts, but we ought to take notice that this simplicity and Country-like plainness only exclude your excessive delicacy in the Thoughts, like that of the refin'd Wits in Courts and Cities, and not the Light which Nature and the Passions bestow of themselves; otherwise the Poet wou'd degenerate and run into Childish Talk that wou'd beget Laughter rather than admiration. Something of this kind is pleasant enough in one of *Rome's Belcar's* Eclogues; where a young Shepherd, having stolen a kiss from a pretty Shepherdess, says to her,

I've kist some new fawn'd Kids, like other Swains,
 I've kist the sucking Calf, which in our Plains
 Young Colin gave me; but this Kiss I swear,
 Is sweeter much than all those Kisses were.

Yet such a Childishness seems more pardonable in this young Shepherd than in the Cyclops Polyphemus. In *Theocritus's Idyllium* that bears his Name and which is fine, he is thinking how to be reveng'd on his Mother, a Sea Nymph, because she never took care to make *Galatea*, another Sea Nymph, have a kindness for his Giantship; so he says to his Mistress, that He'll tell his Mother, to make her mad, that he has a pain in his Head and in his Thighs.

'Tis hard to imagine that, ugly as he was, his Mother cou'd doat on him so much as to be very much concern'd to hear the poor little Urchin had those petty ills, or that the Clownish Giant cou'd invent so gentle a Revenge, his Character is better kept when he promises his Mistress to make her a present of a Litter of Cubs, or young Bears, which he breeds for her in his Cave. And now that I speak of Bears, I wou'd gladly know why *Daphnis* when he is going to die bids adieu to the Bears, the Lyons and the Wolves, as well as to the fair Fountain *Arethuse*, and to the Silver Streams of *Sicily*: Methinks a Man does not often use to regret the Loss of such Company.

I have but one Remark more to make which hath no manner of Connection with those that go before: 'Tis concerning those Eclogues which have a *Burthen* much like those in Ballads, that is, a Verse or two repeated several times. I need not say that we ought to place those repeated Verses in such Parts of the Eclogue as may require, or at least bear such a Verse to interlard them; but it may not be amiss to observe that all the Art that *Theocritus* hath us'd in an *Idyllium* of this kind, was only to take this Burthen and scatter it up and down through his *Idyllium* right or wrong, without the least regard to the Sence of the places where he inserted it, nay without even so much as respecting some of the Phrases which he made no difficulty to split in two.

I have here spoken with a great deal of Freedom of *Theocritus* and *Virgil*, notwithstanding they are Ancients; and I do not doubt but that I shall be esteem'd one of the Profane, by those Pedants who profess a kind of Religion which consists in worshipping the Ancients. 'Tis true, however, that I have often commended *Virgil* and *Theocritus*; but yet I have not always prais'd

705
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